CCAC wants to make Kantan Isla an annual event. PAGE 3
9 at KHS graduate from pilot maritime program. PAGE 5

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

$1

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MONDAY DECEMBER 19, 2022
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Fire engulfs truck near NMC

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A fire engulfed a pickup truck that was carrying two passengers last Saturday afternoon just a few feet from the Northern Marianas College traffic light along Monsignor Guerrero Road. Nobody was injured but it created a massive traffic jam in the lane going up As Terlaje Hill.

The pickup truck was carrying two passengers, the car's owner and one of his employees, at the time it was engulfed in flames. Fortunately, both passengers managed to safely get out of the burning car before

See FIRE on Page 4

Fire engulfs a pickup truck that was carrying two passengers last Saturday afternoon directly across the Northern Marianas College campus along Monsignor Guerrero Road.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

FBI raids BMV, DPS

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation raided the CNMI Bureau of Motor Vehicles and the CNMI Department of Public Safety Central office in Susupe last Friday but there was no immediate word on what they were looking for or what the raid was all about.

Soon after, the CNMI Office of the Governor issued

See FBI on Page 4

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Oscar M. Babauta, extreme right, who chairs the Inauguration Subcommittee for governor-elect Arnold I. Palacios and lieutenant governor-elect David M. Apatang, receives on behalf of Palacios and Apatang the certificates of election from Commonwealth Election Commission board chair Jesus I. Sablan and CEC executive director Kayla S. Igitol after the CEC board certified the Nov. 25 gubernatorial runoff race at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe Friday. Also in the photo is a CEC staff.

CEC board certifies runoff poll results

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Election Commission board certified Friday the results of the Nov. 25, 2022 gubernatorial runoff election after counting the 78 provisional absentee votes at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

Fifty-six votes went to governor-elect Arnold I. Palacios and lieutenant governor-elect David M. Apatang, of

See CEC on Page 4

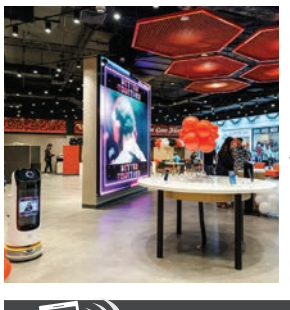
House committees find that $17M appropriated to BOOST

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Torres administration allocated a total of $17 million to its Building Optimism, Opportunity and Stability Together, or BOOST Program, and there is an additional request for $20 million, and that the administrator of the

See HOUSE on Page 4

INSIDE



BUSINESS
Find the new Docomo Pacific store in Concourse 4, Level 1, at the Micronesia Mall in Guam.
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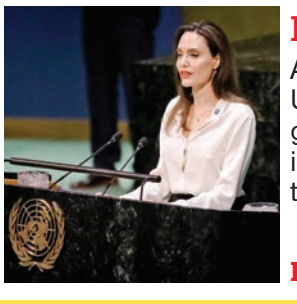
HEALTH & WELLNESS
"P" is for pickleball. And there are four other P's that players should remember to avoid injury.
PAGE 14



LIFE & STYLE
Angelina Jolie and the United Nations' refugee agency are parting ways after more than two decades.
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Local

IN LAWSUIT FILED BY INMATE AGAINST DOC PERSONNEL

Defense wants suit junked over inmate's failure to sign complaint

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The defense lawyer in the lawsuit filed by an inmate against Department of Corrections personnel alleging violations against his Eighth Amendment rights has asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to dismiss the lawsuit entirely over a signature.

Defendant Peter Lieto, through attorney Charles Reyes Jr., has asked the court to dismiss Lin Zhou You's complaint because of his failure to sign the complaint.

"Rule 11(a) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure requires that every pleading, written motion, and other paper must be signed by at least one attorney of record in the attorney's name—or by a party personally if the party is unrepresented. Fed. R. Civ. P. 11(a). According to the rule, the court must strike an unsigned paper unless the omission is promptly corrected after being called to the attorney's or party's attention. In this case, there are similar marks resembling the letter 'x' to the left of the date and signature lines that do not appear to constitute plaintiff's signature," Reyes stated.

He argues that there are marks on the complaint that appear to flag areas requiring completion by Lin, but no markings appear to the right of the date and signature where a date and signature would be customarily placed.

"This matter is called to plaintiff's attention for prompt correction. In the complaint, plaintiff refers to himself in the third person and admits to being helped by a 'prison lawyer,' who may have prepared the complaint for plaintiff without his actual signature," he said.

"Note that inmate writers may assist other prisoners in the preparation of postconviction relief, but no authority authorizes them to engage in the practice of law by filing papers with the court as the inmate's legal representative. In any event, the complaint also does not bear the signature of any other individual purporting to file papers with the court as plaintiff's legal representative," Reyes added.

The court has yet to set a hearing on this matter.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Lin, who is serving time for assaulting his girlfriend in 2020, named Corrections Commissioner Wally Villagomez, DOC director Georgia Cabrera, and prison guard Peter Lieto as defen-

See DEFENSE on Page 4

Public warned of rough seas until Tuesday

The public is being warned that there is a high risk of rip currents through Monday night in east facing reefs of the Marianas. Also, a small craft advisory remains in effect until 6am tomorrow, Tuesday. A small craft advisory means that wind speeds of 21 to 33 knots are expected to produce wave conditions hazardous to small craft.

The public is being warned that rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water. The public is advised to swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, east winds of 15 to 25 knots will be present, with isolated gusts of up to 30 kt and seas of 8 to 11 feet. Winds are expected to decrease below small craft criteria Sunday night, but seas will remain around 10 feet until Tuesday morning. Conditions will be hazardous to small craft.

Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid boating in hazardous conditions. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

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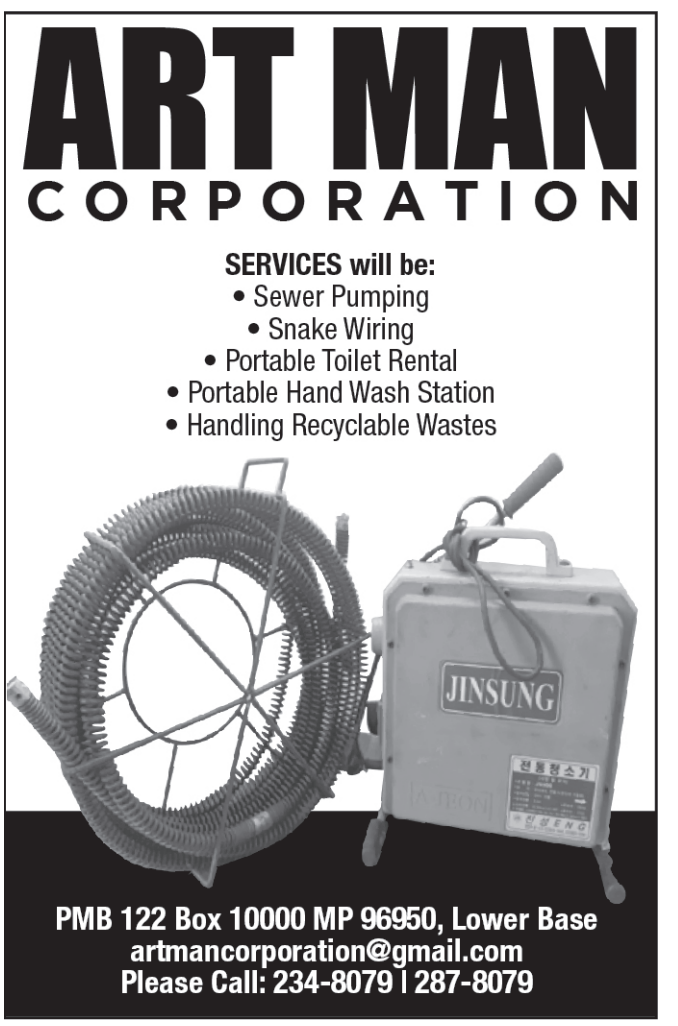

CCAC wants to make Kantan Isla an annual event

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

In an attempt to promote and keep alive indigenous music in the CNMI, the Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture revived last Thursday the Kantan Isla Kkėėlůl Falůu Concert at the Civic center in Susupe.

The four-hour concert featured guest performers singing songs in the Chamorro and Carolinian tongue.

CCAC executive director Parker Yobei said this year's concert edition was a "bit last-minute" event and, with all the holiday events taking place, he did not want compete with other scheduled events like the Fiesta Fridays or the Christmas in the Marianas in Garapan, so they decided to go ahead and hold the concert on a Thursday. "…it's kind of short this year, but our plan is to expand and improve," he added.

Yobei indicated that for next year, the concert would most likely not be in December, but a couple of months earlier. Previous Kantan Isla concerts were usually held in September, since the month is also considered Cultural Heritage Month.

A group performs on stage at the Kantan Isla Kkėėlůl Falůu Concert at the Civic center in Susupe last Thursday.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

The concert, which has a goal of language preservation, began in the '80s, led by the Language Commission, but stopped in the early 2000's due no funding. Yobei said they are able to hold it again, thanks to a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and its annual partnership with CCAC.

The grant, amounting to around $3,900, can only be used strictly for programs under the category of performing arts, but Yobei said the Kantan Isla Kkėėlůl Falůu is also a way to promote and preserve the CNMI's indigenous languages, and in that way they they were "killing two birds with one stone."

Yobei also said that programs like these can also entice young artists to learn the language, since learning through music is much easier. "We're glad we're able to do it this year, and then we'll start planning for next year right away."

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SERVICES (NON-RESTRICTED AREAS)
PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-003-23

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting sealed proposals for grounds maintenance services of the Tinian International Airport on the Island of Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Proposal Package will be available at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, 2nd Floor of the Arrival Building beginning December 02, 2022.

All proposals shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Proposal for Grounds Maintenance Services (Non-Restricted Areas) of the Tinian International Airport, Project No-CPA-RFP-003-23". One original and two (2) copies of the proposal must be submitted no later than 2:00 P.M. LOCAL TIME, December 19, 2022, to the Office of the Executive Director at the Saipan International Airport. Proposals received after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstances.

There will be a Mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference on December 12, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. at the CPA Conference Room of the Tinian International Airport. Site Visit will be conducted shortly after the meeting. Only those proposers who attended this meeting will be allowed to submit their proposals.

Written questions and/or clarifications regarding this project will be entertained up till December 13, 2022.

CPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this RFP; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding proposal rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding this project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA, CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

All proposals shall become the property of CPA.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

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500 Sails to hold free lagoon rides at Hyatt

500 Sails will be holding free lagoon rides every Thursday and Saturday this entire month at the Hyatt Regency Saipan beach site in Garapan.

Labelled as December Hyatt Sails, the free lagoon rides will be available at the Hyatt's beachside on Thursdays from 4pm to 6pm, and 11am yo 2pm on Saturdays. 500 Sails invites the community to check it out.

500 Sails is a 501(c)(3) and CNMI tax-exempt non-profit organization dedicated to reviving, promoting, and preserving the maritime cultural traditions of the Marianas through community engagement in canoe cultural values and activities. Major supporting partners include the CNMI Office of Indigenous Affairs and the Bank of Saipan. ***(Chrystal Marino)***

HOUSE

From Page 1

program, Bank of Saipan, applied for and received $250,000 in BOOST money.

These were some of the initial findings of the Ways and Means Committee and Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee of the House of Representatives in their initial review of BOOST documents they procured via subpoenas to different agencies, entities and individuals.

This developed as William "Wil" Castro, who is chief of staff of the Office of the Governor, was compelled, through a subpoena, to testify before the committees' joint meeting about the BOOST Program in the House chamber Friday. Castro will resume his testimony this morning, Monday.

Castro said the BOOST Program was initially conceived in concept between November of 2021 and February 2022.

In response to House vice speaker Blas Jonathan T. Attao's (Ind-Saipan) questions, Castro said that, based on letters from Finance Secretary David DLG. Atalig, an additional $6 million in addition to the initial $11 million has been appropriated or allocated to the BOOST Program.

"So in summation that would bring us to approximately $17 million, to the best of his knowledge," Castro said.

Attao said the original source was $11 million, then Atalig requested $6 million, then there is an additional request of $20 million that shall be reserved for the BOOST Program. "So that's a total of $37 million for the BOOST Program," Attao said.

Castro said the additional request for funding is news for him if, in fact, that was the "executive will" to infuse an additional $20 million. "I am not privy to that. But my reaction will be that's a great thing," he said, adding that, regardless of who the sitting governor is, the program would be a tremendous benefit to the community.

Attao said he wants to state for the record that there's a spending plan, but there's also a moving of an additional $27 million that has not been approved by the U.S. Department of Treasury.

As to who decided how much funding to allocate to the program, Castro said he would suspect that Atalig is the authorized signatory for and on behalf of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

"So I would have to assume, although I stand to be corrected, that it would be the [Finance] secretary, upon the advice and consent of the governor," he said.,

On the funding source, Castro read a Sept. 23, 2022, letter by Atalig which states that the source of funding is the American Rescue Plan Act Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, otherwise known as the ARPA or CSLFRF.

Castro said he is a member of a review panel and that his job is to review the BOOST applications and to confer with his colleagues, who also sit on the review panel, in order that they are in a sound position to make a recommendation on a list of applicants for review and approval by the governor.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

CEC

From Page 1

the unified independent team, while 22 were received by Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and his running mate, Sen. Vinnie Vinson F. Sablan (R-Saipan), of the Republican Party.

At 5:12pm Friday, CEC executive director Kayla S. Igitol announced that, based on the official tabulation results, in total Palacios-Apatang garnered 7,394 votes, or 54.14% of the total votes, while Torres-Sablan received 6,263 votes, or 45.86%.

In the runoff race, Palacios-Apatang swept the votes in all 10 precincts on Saipan and prevailed in the absentee voting, or for a large margin 1,131 votes. Torres-Sablan won only in the Northern Islands, Tinian, and early voting.

A total of 13,657 votes were counted during the runoff election, while 14,750 in the Nov. 8 general elections, or a difference of 1,093.

In the general election, Torres-Sablan garnered 5,728 votes in all, or an 838-vote lead over Palacios-Apatang, which received 4,890 votes. Rep. Christina E. Sablan and her running mate, Rep. Leila F. Staffler, of the Democratic Party, got 4,132 votes. As Torres-Sablan obtained only 38.83% of the total votes, this paved the way for a square off between Palacios-Apatang and Torres-Sablan during the Nov. 25 runoff race.

» Official CEC count show Palacios-Apatang got 7,394 total votes, Torres-Sablan got 6,263

» With CEC board's certification, transition and inauguration teams are now moving full speed ahead—Babauta

CEC board chair Jesus I. Sablan said in an interview shortly after they certified the runoff election results Friday that overall he believes they did a good job.

Sablan said there were some issues that some people were raising concerning the tabulation process, but if they understand the process they would probably agree with them.

He said there was a delay in the counting of votes, but that it's reasonable delay, especially the processing of the absentee votes as it was taking a lot of time.

"You just don't take out the ballots and count it. We need to make sure that the affidavit is signed. We have to make sure that the ballot is inside the ballot envelope. We have to make sure that there is an affidavit there," Sablan said.

The chairman said if those affidavits are missing, then the ballots are not counted.

"And after that is done, we have to take away the affidavit from the ballot, then we take out the envelope for processing," he said.

Igitol said she feels relieved that four months of the general elections and runoff election have now come to an end. She commended her staff and the board for "doing an awesome job."

She said they also appreciate the assistance of deputy attorney general Lillian A. Tenorio, the Office of the Public Auditor, and any agencies that helped coordinate throughout the elections.

"I'd like to thank them for their hard work too and their dedications throughout this election process," Igitol said.

Former House of the Representatives speaker Oscar M. Babauta said that, on behalf of the Palacios-Apatang 2022 Committee to Elect, he is just elated that finally the chapter of this election is done.

"I'm just so happy that the results are all certified today. I'm so grateful to the staff and the commissioners of our Commonwealth Election Commission for their patience," he said.

Babauta said he is aware that were some technical issues involved within the organization, but that they respect the process.

"I'm sure Arnold and Dave join me in thanking our Commonwealth Election Office for the tedious work that they've done," he said.

Now that the election is finally over, the transition and inauguration are moving full speed ahead, Babauta said.

Babauta chairs the Palacios-Apatang Inauguration Subcommittee.

FIRE

From Page 1

the flames got worse.

Saipan Tribune learned on scene that the truck, which had a trailer for trash collection attached to it, was engulfed in flames possibly due to overheating.

According to a press release from the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, the department was called to respond to the burning car on Saturday, Dec. 17, at approximately 12:54pm. DFEMS teams managed to arrive at the scene soon after.

DFEMS spokesperson Rob Mojica said the officer who arrived on scene first confirmed the report that there was a vehicle near the NMC traffic streetlight that was on fire.

Responding DFEMS personnel report that the vehicle was fully engulfed inside the cabin and under the hood. DFEMS then worked to put out the fire, while police cars cordoned off the area and diverted the flow of traffic.

Responding officers noted that there were two individuals that were inside the vehicle before the fire broke out and they managed to safely get away from the vehicle, according to Mojica.

Mojica said that both men were seen by medics and had no injuries to report.

The all-clear was given at 1:06pm, by alpha shift commander captain, Juan-Climaco T. Laniyo.

The Division of Fire Prevention and Arson Investigation said that investigators arrived at the scene after the fire had been put out to conduct their investigation and assessment. The cause of the fire had yet to be determined as of press time and will be released at a later date and time.

As Terlaje Hill, specifically the traffic stop leading to NMC, is known to be an accident-prone are, with a car also going up in flames back in 2017 following a fatal car crash.

FBI

From Page 1

a memorandum stating that BMV director Juana Leon has been designated as acting DPS commissioner until the incoming administration appoints its own. There was no immediate word on the status of DPS Commissioner Robert Guerrero.

At around 3:30pm last Friday, FBI agents showed up unannounced at the BMV and DPS central office in Susupe to carry out a search warrant issued for both departments.

At the scene, *Saipan Tribune* observed that FBI agents had plastered handwritten "closed" signs on all the doors of the BMV, closing up shop and putting a stop to all BMV activities for the rest of the day as they conducted their search.

Meanwhile, at DPS central office, *Saipan Tribune* learned that FBI agents were reportedly seen going into administrative offices but were not seen taking anything. They were, however, seen taking photos of documents and others.

In a brief interview with DPS spokesperson Adrian Pangelinan, he said he has no information on the contents of the search warrant and what the FBI is specifically searching for.

"I don't have any information regarding anything they're looking for, what department they're looking into, or any specific information they're looking for. I'm trying to get more information and as that information is made available, I will share it," he said.

The sole DPS spokesperson has since gone on personal leave.

Pangelinan also clarified that DPS and the BMV were not aware of the raid until FBI agents showed up at their offices.

"We weren't aware of the raid until I saw one agent. That's when I saw everyone just leaving their office doors open and letting the FBI agents come in and out to conduct their investigation. We're not worried. I believe the agents are just here to carry out the investigation they were instructed to do and if there are any findings, we will get word of it soon," Pangelinan said.

As for DPS' relationship with the FBI, Pangelinan said they have always had a good working relationship and are confident they will do what they have to do and let DPS know of their findings as needed.

"DPS has a good working relationship with the FBI, especially when it comes to high profile cases, like if there are any threats involved and whatnot," he said.

As for Leon's designation as acting DPS commissioner, Pangelinan said, "We're all just anticipating and waiting to find out who will be the incoming DPS chief. But everybody is just waiting at this point to figure out what they can do to help make the transition as smooth as possible."

He declined to provide more details.

DEFENSE

From Page 2

dants in his lawsuit.

According to the complaint, Lin said he was sitting on a chair by a table in Pod 2 Section F on Dec. 5, 2020, when inmate Peter Blas assaulted him by choking him on the neck for about 10 seconds during which he was unable to breathe. He said he was a pretrial detainee at the time of the incident but was placed with sentenced inmates.

He also alleged that at the time of the incident, Lieto, who was the section officer, was not at the duty station. Lin said this violated Corrections regulations requiring a duty officer to be present at all times during an activity.

Lin also alleged that the defendants' actions violated the United Nations' Standard Minimum Rules on the Treatment of Prisoners and violated his rights under the CNMI Constitution.

He said that, as a result of the incident, he suffered trauma and was often taken to the hospital for pain on his hands, head, and fingers. He said he also continues to suffer depression, severe pain, and excruciating headaches.

Lin is seeking compensatory and punitive damages for his injuries and pain and suffering, including emotional distress, in a total amount of $100,000.

9 graduate from pilot maritime program at KHS

Western Pacific Maritime Academy announced Friday that it graduated nine Kagman High School students in Basic Training Personal Safety and Social Responsibility Course, one of several courses that are required for working offshore on ships.

WPMA is teaching maritime courses in a pilot program at KHS and Da'ok High School and will eventually expand to the rest of CNMI high schools. The first course of instruction for training the next generation of professional mariners is applying for a Merchant Marine Credential.

Students in the maritime program are called "midshipmen." The new KHS midshipmen are Michael Tomokane, Stanley Delia, Raymond Borden, Frances Borja, Roby, Leanalyn Reyes, Kenshiro Yanai, Marvin Reyes, William Priest and Vynna Tudela.

PSSR is an eight-hour course that was instructed over several sessions. It includes topics such as emergency procedures, safe working practices, marine pollution prevention, shipboard communications, and human relations.

At KHS, seven of 15 students have completed the MMC application process. The MMC application process consists of getting a Transportation Workers Identification Card, a U.S. Coast Guard Medical Examination, a Department of Transportation drug test, and other required documents. The MMC application and all maritime courses are funded by the Public School System.

Kagman High School principal Ben Jones, rightmost, and Captain Mike Bacher, leftmost, flank midshipmen, from left to right, Michael Tomokane, Stanley Delia, Raymond Borden, Frances Borja, Roby, Leanalyn Reyes, Kenshiro Yanai, Marvin Reyes, William Priest and Vynna Tudela. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

WPMA's PSS maritime workforce development program steers candidates into high paying jobs in the maritime sector as entry level credentialed professional mariners as deck seamen, engineers or members of the catering department.

An entry level seaman in the U.S. Merchant Marine can earn upwards of $5,000 per month through one of a number of Maritime Unions or Military Sealift Command. In the wake of COVID-19, the maritime sector is experiencing a huge demand for credentialed mariners.

WPMA is a non-profit corporation located on Saipan with its maritime offices and classrooms located at the Northern Marianas Technical Institute in Lower Base. The academy will be offering a full suite of USCG approved maritime courses and services to the seafaring public.

For further information about the PSS programs, contact your principal and raise at your PTSA meetings. For additional information about our programs or information on how to apply, contact Selina Taitano at staitano@wpma.net. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

BENJAMIN TAISACAN MANGLONA ROTA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SERVICES (NON-RESTRICTED AREAS)

PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-004-23

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting sealed proposals for grounds maintenance services of the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona Rota International Airport on the Island of Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Proposal Package will be available at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, 2nd Floor of the Arrival Building beginning December 02, 2022.

All proposals shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Proposal for Grounds Maintenance Services (Non-Restricted Areas) of the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona Rota International Airport, Project No-CPA-RFP-004-23". One original and two (2) copies of the proposal must be submitted no later than 2:00 P.M. LOCAL TIME, December 19, 2022, to the Office of the Executive Director at the Saipan International Airport. Proposals received after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstances.

There will be a Mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference on December 13, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. at the BTM Rota International Airport. Site Visit will be conducted shortly after the meeting. Only those proposers who attended this meeting will be allowed to submit their proposals.

Written questions and/or clarifications regarding this project will be entertained up till December 14, 2022.

CPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this RFP; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding proposal rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding this project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA, CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

All proposals shall become the property of CPA.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

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Saipan Lions Club marks 30, swears in new officers

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Lion's Club of Saipan met at the Crowne Plaza Resort in Garapan last Dec. 3, 2022, for the celebration of their club's 30th charter anniversary, as well as to induct new members and install officers and board of directors for the year 2022-23.

All nine Lions Club on Saipan were present for the event, and District 204 officers from Guam also came to witness the event. After a brief overview of the Saipan's Unity Lions Club history, the group held a a parade of honor for all past and present presidents of Saipan Unity Lions Club.

District 204 governor Loisa Cabuhat installed the new officers of Saipan Unity Lions Club for 2022-2023. They are Lindie Mae Moleno (president), Lion Yolanda Villavicencio (immediate past president), Marilyn Parnes (first vice president), Bongbong Martinez (second vice president), Caroline Tamparong (secretary), Mildred Ebuen (assistant secretary), Elmera Lacap (treasurer), and Annibelle Lopena (assistant treasurer).

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Members of the Lion's Club of Saipan met at the Crowne Plaza Resort in Garapan last Dec. 3, 2022, for the celebration of their club's 30th charter anniversary, as well as to induct new members and install officers and board of directors for the year 2022-23.

Coming in as Membership Committee chair is Argie Buensalido; Birhen Martinez is Service Committee chair; Angelica Vina Lastimado is Marketing and Communication chair; Hermelina Tanghal is auditor; Virginia Villaluna is assistant auditor; Gil Anonuevo is the safety officer; Elsa Bangilan is assistant safety officer; Soledad Cruz is called "Lion Tamer"; and Anne David is the "Tail Twister."

Two Years Club directors are Willy Barbo and Eva Cuevas. One Year Club directors are Joe Digno and Mae Alegre. Lucia Buensalido is Leo adviser, while Lhita Cuevas is assistant Leo adviser. Club Adviser is Atoy Banting and Alicia Barbo is the new Club Director.

The New Officers of Saipan Teen Unity Leo Club for 2022-2023 are Angel Lou Buensalido as president, Trixia Jhoanne Regadon as vice president, Jose Rafael Lopez as secretary, Kriselle Bryana Drillon as treasurer, Leo Juliana Vergara as P.R.O., Mary Danica Salinas as Historian, and Francine Joy Ebuen for Telecommunications. Club directors are Kaitlyn Punzalan, Jane Nicole Mozunder, and Abegail Amog.

Nine brand new members of Saipan Unity Lions Club and six new members of Saipan Teen Unity Leo Club were inducted during the event.

District 204 governor Loisa Cabuhat, second vice district governor Roy Adonay, and international president of Lions Club International Brian E. Sheehan also spoke and congratulated the club for their dedication and hard work throughout the year.

Moleno later thanked her family and the SULC family for their support and said she was humbled to be part of the group. "I can confidently say I would not be here tonight without my family and SULC family. It is my absolute honor and privilege to stand before you on this momentous event and the most awaited words to say: Yes! I accept to be the president of SULC for this Lion Year 2022-2023. I accept this position with pride and will give my best effort to make you proud."

The Saipan Unity Lions Club was established on Nov. 17, 1992, and has been serving the community since.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (1-670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com
Website: www.cnmiports.com

REVISED NOTICE OF BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Commonwealth Ports Authority hereby gives notice that there will be Board Committee Meetings on Thursday, December 22, 2022, at 9:30 a.m. in the Tinian Conference Center inside of the Tinian Western Lodge in San Jose, Tinian. The following items are on the agenda for the above-referenced meeting:

COMMITTEE AGENDAS

PERSONNEL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

I. Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes (November 03, 2022)
II. Public Comments
III. Old Business: None
  1. CPA Employee Handbook
  2. Revision of Position Description for IT
  3. Drug Policy
IV. New Business:
  1. DRAFT Position Description: Lease Compliance Clerk
  2. Supervisor Evaluation
  3. Updated Personnel Affairs Committee Report
V. Executive Session (if needed)
VI. Miscellaneous/Announcements
VII. Adjournment

AIRPORT FACILITIES COMMITTEE

I. Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes (November 03, 2022)
II. Public Comments
III. Old Business:
  1. Solar Request for Proposal (RFP) Status Report
  2. Public-Private Partnership
  3. Request for Proposal for Owner Engineer Agent
IV. New Business:
  1. Retail Concession (Rota)
    a. Determination of Scope
    b. Procurement method
    c. Evaluation Plan
  2. Authority Concession Grant (CPA-RFP-011-22)
  3. Updated Airport Facilities Committee Report
V. Executive Session (if needed)
VI. Miscellaneous/Announcements
VII. Adjournment

SEAPORT FACILITIES COMMITTEE

I. Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes (November 03, 2022)
II. Public Comments
III. Old Business:
  1. Saipan Shipping Lease
IV. New Business:
  1. Updated Seaport Facilities Committee Report
V. Executive Session (if needed)
VI. Miscellaneous/Announcements
VII. Adjournment

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

I. Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes (November 03, 2022)
II. Public Comments
III. Old Business:
  1. Audit Corrective Action Update
IV. New Business:
  1. Supplemental Budget Request: Saipan ARFF Training Facility Typhoon Repairs Professional Services
  2. Supplemental Budget Request: Saipan Airport Roll Up Doors Replacement Construction Management Services
  3. Supplemental Budget Request: Tinian Airport CBP/TSA Implementation A&E Design Services
  4. Procurement Regulations: Small Purchase
  5. Updated Financial Affairs Committee Report
V. Executive Session
VI. Miscellaneous/Announcements
VII. Adjournment

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. A time limit may be imposed. Video Conferencing is also available via Zoom. Zoom link: Meeting ID: 868 9696 0949 Passcode: CPAboard

Barrie C. Toves, Airport Facilities Chair | Ramon A. Tebuteb, Financial Affairs Chair | Pete P. Reyes, Seaport Facilities Chair | Joseph M. Diaz, Personnel Affairs Chair

Port of Saipan, PO Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, Tel. (670) 664-3550/8, Fax. (A) 322-4710
Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport, PO Box 561, Rota, MP 96951, Tel. (670) 532-9497 Fax. (670) 532-9499
Tinian International Airport/Seaport, PO boc 235, Tinian MP 96952, Tel. (670) 433-9294, Fax (670) 233-0790

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

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PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM • WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

REVISED NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) hereby gives notice that a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Thursday, December 22, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. in the Tinian Conference Center inside of the Tinian Western Lodge in San Jose, Tinian. The following items are on the agenda for the above-referenced meeting:

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
  1. Call to Order
  2. Roll Call
  3. Adoption of Agenda
  4. Adoption of Minutes (November 03, 2022)
II. PUBLIC COMMENT(S)
III. CORRESPONDENCES
IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS
  1. Financial Affairs Committee
  2. Airport Facilities Committee
  3. Seaport Facilities Committee
  4. Personnel Affairs Committee
V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
VI. OLD BUSINESS:
  1. Revision of Position Description for IT
  2. Request for Proposal for Owner Engineer Agent
  3. Saipan Shipping Lease
VII. NEW BUSINESS:
  1. Resolution 2022-02: Resolution honoring the late Antonio S. Camacho, Jr.
  2. Procurement Regulations: Small Purchase
  3. Retail Concession (Rota)
    a. Determination of Scope
    b. Procurement method
    c. Evaluation Plan
  4. Authority Concession Grant (CPA-RFP-011-22)
  5. CPA Employee Handbook
  6. Drug Policy
  7. DRAFT Position Description: Lease Compliance Clerk
  8. Supervisor Evaluation
  9. Supplemental Budget Request: Saipan ARFF Training Facility Typhoon Repairs Professional Services
  10. Supplemental Budget Request: Saipan Airport Roll Up Doors Replacement Construction Management Services
  11. Supplemental Budget Request: Tinian Airport CBP/TSA Implementation A&E Design Service
VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION
  • Legal Counsel Reports: Legal matters/Litigation
IX. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS
X. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. A time limit may be imposed. Video Conferencing is also available via Zoom.
Zoom link: Zoom link: Meeting ID: 868 9696 0949 Passcode: CPAboard

ROMAN T. TUDELA
Acting Chairman, Board of Directors
December 09, 2022

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Lizama urges JGO to push passage of CCTV bill

Rep. Richard T. Lizama (D-Saipan) on Thursday urged the Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee in the House of Representatives to act on his bill that would provide an incentive for business establishments to install closed circuit television cameras in their premises.

At the JGO meeting in the House chamber, Lizama noted that a CCTV installed on a poker arcade helped reverse a police report about a vehicular accident last week.

He said similar CCTV bill was passed in the last Legislature, but the Senate failed to act on it.

The lawmaker said he "recycled" the bill and it's been with the House JGO.

He cited an instance when the Department of Public Safety issued a report about a car accident near Hopwood Junior High School in Chalan Piao, but the report was later reversed because a CCTV in one of the poker arcades in the area captured the accident.

"I would like to see [the bill] in the next JGO meeting if possible," Lizama said.

Vice speaker Rep. Blas Jonathan T. Attao said there will be a House JGO Committee and Ways and Means Committee joint session Monday so he will talk with Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) and floor leader Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan) if they can place the bill on the floor for action in the next session.

Lizama stated in the bill that many crimes remain unsolved due to little or no evidence, as well as due to limited DPS resources. However, Lizama said, some crimes have been resolved through the use of CCTV cameras, which provide video footage evidence crucial to law enforcement.

To enhance the security of businesses, neighborhoods, and the public, all businesses shall be offered an incentive in the form of a tax credit of up to $500 to install CCTVs at their entrance and exit points. To avail of this incentive, CCTVs shall record 24 hours a day and seven days a week and keep all recordings for 45 days. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

HOLIDAY HOURS

NMC campuses closed from Dec. 19, 2022 to Jan. 2, 2023

Northern Marianas College campuses on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota will be closed from Dec. 19, 2022 to Jan. 2, 2023. Offices will reopen on Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2023.

While offices are closed during this time, ongoing students can continue to register for classes by accessing their ProaPortal accounts and new students can register for classes if they have contacted their adviser for academic advising. Students will also be able to make changes to their schedule during "add and drop" week on Jan. 17 - 21, 2023, but course selection may be limited during this period.

More information about NMC's spring 2023 Semester can be found on www.marianas.edu.

For urgent matters, community members are asked to email nmc@marianas.edu.

For campus emergencies, contact NMC security at 237-6800. ***(NMC)***

AMP Visitor Center hours for Dec. 19-31

The American Memorial Park will temporarily adjust the days of operation at the Visitor Center from Dec. 19 to Dec. 31. The temporary schedule will be as follows:

- **OPEN**: Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday 9am-4pm
- **CLOSED**: Sunday/Monday/Saturday
- We will return to our regular schedule the first week of January 2023. The Visitor Center schedule, beginning Jan. 1, 2023, will be:
- **OPEN**: Tuesday/Friday/Saturday 9am-4pm
- **CLOSED**: Sunday/Monday/Wednesday/Thursday

UNITED STATES
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 12, the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities hereby gives notice that it will hold its 3rd Quarter General Membership Meeting on December 29, 2022, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Saipan World Resort – Sunflower Room.

AGENDA

I. Call to Order
II. Roll Call
III. Review & Adoption of the Agenda of December 29, 2022
IV. Review & Adoption of Meeting Minutes of July 20th and September 30th, 2022
V. Action Item
a. Ratify the Approval of the Proposed FY 2023 DD Basic Grant Budget
b. Ratify the Approval of the Proposed FY 2023 Assistive Technology Grant Budget
VI. Reports
a. Chairman
b. State Plan Committee Chairperson
c. Fiscal Committee Chairperson
d. Executive Director
VII. New Business
a. Family Transition Symposium
b. Meet Your Policymaker Event
c. Champions of Equal Opportunity Award Ceremony Nominations
d. March 2023 Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month
VIII. Old Business
a. Robert's Rules of Order Refresher
b. 2022 NDEAM Update
IX. Miscellaneous
X. Next Meeting
XI. Adjournment

Note: Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 13(a) 7, the Council may vote to meet in Executive Session. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend this meeting and require special accommodations are requested to call the Council 5 days in advance at 664-7000. The Public is welcome to submit written or 3 minutes of oral comments regarding the agenda above.

/s/ **Concepcion Ulloa**
Chairperson

This ad is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award total $274,744 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

PUBLIC NOTICE

This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds.

COMBINED NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation
Saipan, MP 96950 Tel: (670) 234-9447/6866

This notice shall satisfy the above-cited two separate but related procedural notification requirements.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or after January 20, 2023, the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Honolulu Field Office, for the release of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (PL 93-383), as amended, to undertake the following projects and purposes in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands:

Project/Activity Type	Purpose	Location	Total Project Cost
The Construction of a Multi-Purpose Facility for the Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan	To provide the community an accessible indoor space facility for meetings, trainings and program outreach.	San, Jose Tinian	$195,500.00

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed projects will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Central Office in Garapan, Saipan and may be examined or copied during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI or Austerity Holidays, from 7:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group or agency disagreeing with this determination or wishing to comment on the projects may submit written comments to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950 or direct delivery to the central office in Garapan, Saipan. All comments received by **January 20, 2023, 4:30 p.m.**, will be considered by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Commentors should specify which part of this Notice they are addressing.

RELEASE OF FUNDS

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certifies to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD Honolulu Field Office that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Governor Ralph DLG. Torres consent to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process, and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office acceptance of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and related laws and authorities, and allows the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to use Program Funds.

OBJECTION TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office will accept objections to its release of funds and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands certification for a **period of fifteen (15) days** following anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if it is on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands; (b) the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the grant recipient has incurred cost not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of the release of funds by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures of 24 CFR Part 58 and shall be addressed to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Honolulu Field Office by email to CPD Honolulu Field Office: CPDHonolulu@hud.gov and CPD_COVID-19OEE-HNL@hud.gov. Potential objectors should contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

/s/
Ralph DLG Torres
Governor, CNMI

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

Congress can't waste this immigration opportunity

For all the acrimony surrounding immigration politics, a majority of Americans have long supported two goals: giving undocumented immigrants who came to the US as children a pathway to legal status, and securing the country's southern border. With only days remaining in the current Congress, lawmakers have an opportunity to deliver major breakthroughs on both priorities.

A proposal by Sens. Thom Tillis and Kyrsten Sinema would reportedly provide a 10-year path to citizenship for some 2 million undocumented immigrants, known as Dreamers, who were brought to the US as children and who've lived in the country for much of their lives. It would also extend Title 42—a public-health rule that allows for the expedited removal of border crossers—for at least a year. This would give officials a much-needed tool to ease pressure on the border, which saw a record 2.4 million attempted crossings in the year to October.

Just as important, the proposal addresses flaws in the asylum system that cause lengthy delays and encourage migrants to take ever-bigger risks in hopes of being released into the country. It would help clear the current backlog of claims by funding more asylum officers and judges. It would also authorize new processing centers for asylum-seekers. And additional funds would go toward hiring more Border Patrol officers and raising the pay of current employees. All told, the plan would reportedly cost up to $40 billion.

Though countless efforts to forge an immigration compromise have failed in the past, there's reason to believe this time is different. That's because lawmakers have rarely faced more urgency to act.

For one thing, the absence of a legislative solution for the Dreamers has left them at the mercy of legal battles over the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which protects some 600,000 people from deportation but could still be struck down by the Supreme Court. Meanwhile, a federal judge has ordered the government to halt the use of Title 42 by Dec. 21. With no viable replacement policy on the table, the crisis at the border is likely to worsen unless lawmakers finally take some responsibility for managing it.

Of course, plenty of obstacles could still obstruct such a deal. Tillis and Sinema need to line up at least 10 Republican votes in the Senate to overcome a potential filibuster. Nor is support for the proposal guaranteed among the lame-duck Democratic majority in the House. By design, the Sinema-Tillis framework aims to reduce strain on the asylum system by discouraging migrants from attempting to cross the border and expelling more of those who do. This has angered immigration advocates and progressives in Congress, some of whom have already announced their opposition.

That's all the more reason to move quickly. The framework produces solid wins for each party: Democrats can envision as many as 2 million unauthorized immigrants finally getting their status resolved and Republicans can expect to see a serious effort made to control the border. At the same time, neither side gets everything it wants. That's the sign of a good compromise.

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How Americans can get more safe, sustainable seafood on their plates

By ERIC SCHWAAB and MARY SUE MILLIKEN
LOS ANGELES TIMES

There's a culinary revolution happening in the United States. More than ever before, Americans expect their meals to not only be delicious, but sustainable and local too. They're increasingly turning to seafood options as a nutritious and more environmentally friendly source of protein. While restaurants and markets that can meet this demand are reaping the benefits, more supply is needed.

Currently, up to 85% of American seafood is imported, and it is estimated that half of that is farmed—often in ways that may not live up to our health or environmental standards. Meanwhile, a 2021 poll showed that 70% of American seafood consumers are concerned about where their seafood comes from and nearly 90% of U.S. voters prioritize increasing regulations and setting high standards to ensure seafood is truly sustainable. Notably, this includes 92% of Democrats and 86% of Republicans. Leaders looking for bipartisan priorities need look no further than their next meal.

> We need to be growing a domestic seafood economy that includes both sustainable aquaculture and wild capture fisheries.

Part of the solution is to make more sustainable, homegrown aquaculture—the farming of seafood in U.S. waters—a reality. While some states permit seafood farming near shore, the U.S. needs comprehensive standards for farms more than three nautical miles offshore, in federal waters, to allow a sustainable industry to develop. Safely growing seafood in federal waters could help stabilize supply for chefs and consumers, drive job creation in coastal economies and the seafood supply chain and meet America's growing demand for sustainably sourced, nutritious protein. We need to be growing a domestic seafood economy that includes both sustainable aquaculture and wild capture fisheries.

A new bill would take the first, responsible steps toward building a strong, sustainable aquaculture industry in the U.S.: the Science-based Equitable Aquaculture Food Act (SEAfood Act.) It was introduced last week in Congress by Rep. Alan Lowenthal, a California Democrat.

There are potential risks and unknown, unintended side effects of aquaculture that must be addressed. Equipment failures can lead to more pollution that endangers wildlife, and fish escapes could interfere with wild fisheries, upsetting delicate ecosystems that support existing livelihoods. Additionally, we must ensure that the food required for fish farms does not deplete other species critical to ocean health.

That's why the SEAfood Act is so important. It would drive the studies necessary to ensure regulatory standards for aquaculture in offshore federal waters that limit the effects on marine ecosystems and protect coastal communities. It's a thoughtful, necessary way to close knowledge gaps, set strong standards that inform future regulations and ensure that aquaculture in the U.S. grows within guidelines that are truly sustainable. Only such a science-backed approach can protect our oceans while also meeting consumer demand.

Congress has passed needed legislation like this before. When our wild fisheries were collapsing, the bipartisan Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act set a new standard for science-based policies and sustainable practices that helped save American fishing. With a new industry in offshore aquaculture, we can build on the successes of the U.S.' $1.5-billion aquaculture farms that are already growing more than 90 million pounds of seafood such as oysters, clams and salmon every year. But offshore, aquaculture of fish comes with unique risks and challenges that we must understand before we move forward. The SEAfood Act would help us do that.

When sustainable offshore aquaculture thrives in U.S. waters, we will be less vulnerable to the kinds of supply chain shocks the coronavirus pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine have caused. It also could boost the economy of coastal communities and improve equity by creating grants for education and career development programs at institutions serving Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiians and other traditionally underserved constituencies.

Make no mistake: More aquaculture is coming. The global population is growing and with it comes the need for more protein. So U.S. lawmakers should pass the SEAfood Act and invest in research now to help ensure that aquaculture in U.S. federal waters is done right from the start.

Eric Schwaab is senior vice president of people and nature at the Environmental Defense Fund. Mary Sue Milliken is an award-winning chef and small business owner. They are both founding members of the Coalition for Sustainable Aquaculture.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

China is pushing a pacifist Japan into building up its military capabilities

By DANIEL DEPETRIS
Chicago Tribune

Daniel DePetris is a fellow at Defense Priorities and a foreign affairs columnist for the Chicago Tribune.

Japan isn't known for being an aggressive country in the world of foreign affairs. Successive Japanese governments have taken pains to emphasize their peacelike nature, a direct consequence of Tokyo finding itself on the losing side of the most horrific war of the 20th century. Japan's constitution renounces the use of force as a "means of settling international disputes," and at $54 billion as of last year, its defense budget is extremely modest compared with its $4.9 trillion economy.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, however, no longer believes Tokyo's traditional defense policy and military outlays are sufficient. The security dynamics in East Asia today are much different and arguably more threatening to Japan than they were in the decades after World War II, even when one accounts for the fact that Tokyo has a U.S. security guarantee and about 55,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Japanese territory. Kishida wants Japan's defense budget to double over the next five years, a massive investment for a country with the highest ratio of debt to gross domestic product in the developed world.

Even so, the international security environment in Japan's neighborhood is pushing policymakers and lawmakers to support what would ordinarily be off the table. Japanese officials normally reluctant to weigh in on some of the region's most controversial security disputes are now doing so far more liberally. Koichi Hagiuda, chairman of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's Policy Research Council, not only criticized China for its increasing belligerence over Taiwan but did so during a trip to the self-governed island. While one has to be cautious in extrapolating too much from a single event, Hagiuda's comments at least suggest that some in Tokyo's policy elite are no longer content with sitting back and quietly registering their disapproval. Warning China of destabilizing what has been a relatively calm and orderly balance of power between Asia's great powers is now deemed more important than keeping friction at a minimum.

It's understandable why Japan believes a change in approach is needed. Today's China is not the China of the 1970s or even the China of the 1990s, when it was still considered a middle power with a subpar military capability and a significant poverty problem. Notwithstanding the slower economic growth and socioeconomic problems associated with the coronavirus, the China of 2022 is on its way toward becoming Asia's preeminent military and economic power.

At the turn of this century, Beijing's defense budget clocked in at slightly more than $22 billion; in 2020, that figure reached $252 billion, an 11-fold increase. The People's Liberation Army, or PLA, as the Chinese military is formally named, has invested a significant sum of that money toward building its navy, bolstering its missile capacity (China has the world's largest stockpile of intermediate-range ballistic missiles) and researching the next generation of weapons technology.

The Chinese Communist Party under Xi Jinping also isn't afraid to demonstrate some of those capabilities when the situation demands it. The world saw this most recently in August, when House Speaker Nancy Pelosi overrode Biden administration concerns and proceeded with a visit to Taiwan. After Pelosi's trip, the PLA launched a multiday military exercise, simulating a blockade of Taiwan, sending dozens of aircraft across the de facto boundary separating China and Taiwan's airspace, and firing missiles into the sky—one of which landed in Japan's exclusive economic zone.

Nobody is arguing the PLA is preparing for an invasion of Japanese territory, of course. But to the Japanese government, the exercises over the summer were confirmation that Tokyo needed to improve its own defense capacity and diversify its security partnerships with states that share the same concerns about Chinese power. One of those states is Australia, which just unveiled a 7.4% year-over-year boost to its own defense budget. Tokyo and Canberra are in discussions to collaborate more deeply in the military realm, including engaging in more bilateral military drills and possibly flying combat aircraft to one another's territory.

Unilaterally, Japan is also targeting its defense investments and broadening the concept of what it means to act in self-defense. Washington and Tokyo have been in talks since the spring on a deal that would provide Japan with hundreds of U.S.-made Tomahawk cruise missiles, which have a range of more than 1,000 miles and would be a stopgap as the Japanese work to accelerate enhancing the distance of their own land-based missile systems. Acquiring a so-called counterstrike capability would have been quite controversial only a few years ago since these missile systems would be able to hit targets in China and North Korea. But the shift in Japanese public opinion toward developing an offensive military capability is striking: A May poll conducted by two Japanese news outlets found more than 64% of respondents supported holding enemy bases at risk with long-range standoff weapons in order to strengthen deterrence.

U.S. policymakers talk a lot about burden sharing, or the notion that U.S. allies need to pad their defense budgets and transform themselves into legitimate security contributors rather than security dependents. Yet burden shifting, or U.S. allies taking primary responsibility for their own security, is just as important.

Time will tell if Japan's sudden burst of activity on the defense front will be sustained over the long term. What we can say with confidence is that China's campaign to become the superior power in Asia is forcing others, even a pacifist Japan, to take defense more seriously than it has in the past.

Expect this type of balancing behavior to continue in the future.

High marks for this education policy, but still room for improvement

By JASON BEDRICK and JONATHAN BUTCHER
THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

As a classroom teacher and mother of 10 children, Esther Fleurant knows that every child has different needs. And she knows how important education is for their futures.

"I love for my kids to know more than I did," says Esther. "Knowledge is powerful. You give that to your kids, and you open the world to them."

But finding the learning environment that's the right fit for each child can be tough. Fortunately for Esther, she and her kids live in New Hampshire, where they have access to Education Freedom Accounts (EFAs). This has allowed her family to explore a variety of options, including different private schools and homeschooling.

State lawmakers created EFAs last year to expand access to a wide range of education options. Families earning up to 300% of the federal poverty level ($83,250 for a family of four in 2022-23) can use EFAs to pay for private school tuition, tutoring, textbooks, homeschool curricula, online courses, educational therapies and more.

The EFAs were an instant hit with families. Last fall, more than 1,600 students received EFAs—about 1% of students in the state. This school year, there are more than 3,000 EFA students. Additionally, more than 1,300 students are using tax-credit scholarships—up from last year by about 30%—and about 5,000 students are attending public charter schools.

New Hampshire's commitment to empowering families with so many education options is one reason the Live Free or Die state fared so well in the Heritage Foundation's Education Freedom Report Card—a survey of all 50 states in the areas of education choice, academic transparency, regulatory freedom for schools and a high return on investment for taxpayer spending on education.

New Hampshire ranked 19th in the nation for education freedom overall and 15th for its education choice policies.

Studies find that offering children additional public and private learning options results in higher levels of achievement and school attainment, greater civic participation and tolerance, and lower levels of crime. Choice policies even benefit students who remain in the district school system. Of 28 studies of the effects of education choice policies on the performance of district schools, 25 found statistically significant positive effects.

New Hampshire could improve its education choice score by expanding eligibility to its EFAs to all K-12 students.

More parents are choosing how and where their children learn today because watchdogs have found educators are using radical ideas about gender and race in classrooms. Surveys taken around the country find most parents say that the idea that America is systemically racist or that minor-age children can "choose" their "gender" does not reflect their values—nor are such ideas based on facts. New Hampshire lawmakers were among the first in the U.S. to reject the application of critical race theory in K-12 classrooms by adopting a proposal that says no teacher or student can be compelled to believe the theory's discriminatory concepts. In our report, New Hampshire ranks 13th for academic transparency based, in part, on this provision.

A high degree of transparency enables parents to hold schools accountable directly. The best way to ensure quality is not through top-down regulations and red tape, but rather bottom-up accountability. New Hampshire takes the latter approach, ranking ninth in the nation for regulatory freedom. Schools and teachers have a lot of leeway to operate as they see fit, and parents provide accountability through their freedom to choose the schools that work best for their kids.

Still, there's room to improve by making it easier for aspiring teachers to enter the profession. Policymakers could do that by opening alternative pathways to teacher certification (or by eliminating teacher certification requirements altogether) and by allowing full reciprocity of teacher licensure with other states.

New Hampshire policymakers also need to do more to get spending under control, particularly at the local level. The average per-pupil expenditure, when adjusted for regional cost of living, is the 10th highest in the nation. High spending combined with a significant unfunded pension liability makes for a low return on investment for taxpayers—43rd in the nation.

One area where policymakers could rein in spending is nonteaching staff. New Hampshire's district schools employ 12 non-teachers for every 10 teachers. This may help to swell union ranks but does little to keep taxpayer resources in classrooms to help prepare students.

In short, New Hampshire has much to be proud of and much to improve.

As for Esther's children, she says she can "see how they are growing." Homeschooling with an EFA has given them "the liberty to try different things. Giving your child a chance to get to know themselves is huge."

All children should have the same opportunities. As Esther observed: "It's better when you have choices."

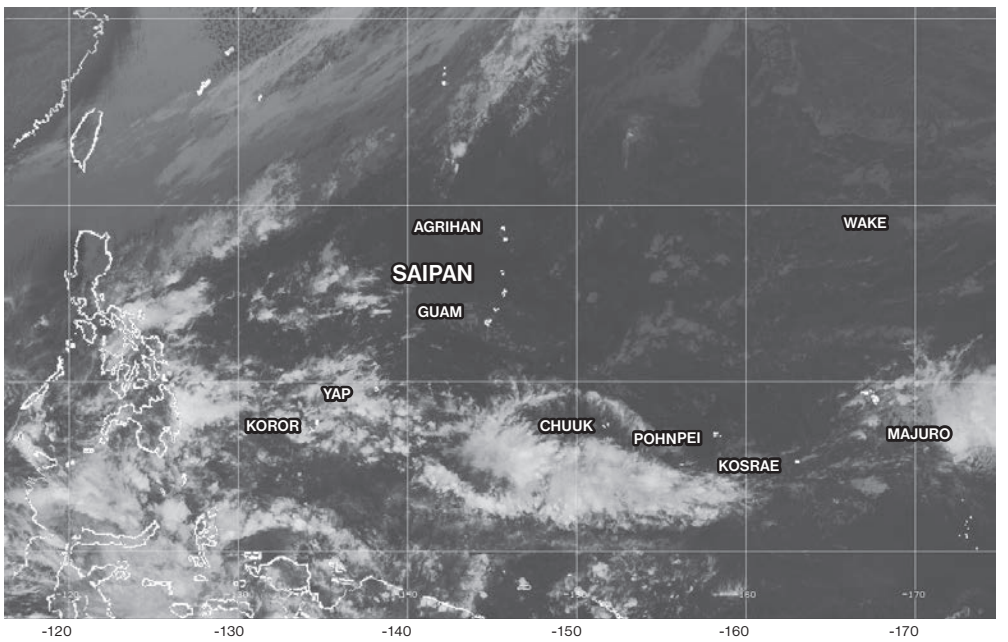
Jason Bedrick is a research fellow in The Heritage Foundation's Center for Education Policy. Jonathan Butcher is The Heritage Foundation's Will Skillman Fellow in Education.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Scattered showers. Mostly cloudy	Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny	A chance of showers. Partly sunny	A chance of showers. Partly sunny
86º / 77º	86º / 77º	88º / 76º	88º / 77º	88º / 77º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:52 AM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Guam`s Doppler Radar shows isolated to scattered showers across the Marianas this morning with most of the showers being detected in Guam and Rota waters. Buoys around the Marianas are reporting combined seas around 8 to 10 feet, with altimetry data showing pushing 11 feet well west and east of the Marianas.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	82° / 76°
Yap	Scattered Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	87° / 80°
Pohnpei	Scattered Thunderstorms	87° / 79°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	84° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Tuesday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Wednesday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Thursday	6:38 AM	5:51 PM
Friday	6:38 AM	5:51 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	1:47 AM	2:22 PM	-
Tuesday	2:37 AM	2:58 PM	-
Wednesday	3:28 AM	3:36 PM	-
Thursday	4:22 AM	4:17 PM	-
Friday	5:19 AM	5:03 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	74° / 61°
Beijing	Sunny	35° / 14°
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	60° / 56°
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	77° / 71°
London	Showers/Wind	56° / 50°
Los Angeles	Sunny	66° / 42°
Manila	Cloudy	84° / 77°
Melbourne	Sunny	78° / 50°
Miami	Showers	76° / 66°
New York	Mostly Cloudy	41° / 30°
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	44° / 35°
Paris	Cloudy	54° / 51°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	42° / 29°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	60° / 39°
Salem	Sunny	50° / 27°
San Francisco	Sunny	55° / 38°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	28° / 14°
Tokyo	Sunny	48° / 33°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	41° / 28°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
4:26 AM	High Tide	1.21
9:37 AM	Low Tide	0.68
3:50 PM	High Tide	1.73
11:03 PM	Low Tide	0.00

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:00AM	7:45AM	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	8:00PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau
OZ624/701	3:40PM	10:35AM+1	3,6 via Incheon

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

OZ624	3:40PM	7:40PM	3, 6
TW308	4:30PM	8:20PM	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	3, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:46AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	12:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	12:40AM	8:46AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:46AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:46AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
OZ704/623	11:50PM	2:40PM+1	2, 5 via Incheon

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ623	9:00AM	2:40PM	3, 6
TW307	10:00AM	3:30PM	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

BX622	8:00AM	1:10PM	3, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS

INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF AUGUST 18, 2022

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:00 A.M.	7:15 A.M.	(Except Sundays)
9:50 A.M.	10:05 A.M.	
4:00 P.M.	4:15 P.M.	(Except Saturdays)

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:35 A.M.	7:50 A.M.	(Except Sundays)
10:25 A.M.	10:40 A.M.	
4:35 P.M.	4:50 P.M.	(Except Saturdays)

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
8:10 A.M.	8:40 A.M.	
1:45 P.M.	2:15 P.M.	

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
9:00 A.M.	9:30 A.M.	
2:35 P.M.	3:05 P.M.	

SAIPAN TO GUAM

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
11:10 A.M.	12:00 P.M.	
5:15 P.M.	6:05 P.M.	

GUAM TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
12:30 P.M.	1:20 P.M.	
6:40 P.M.	7:30 P.M.	

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/ Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/ Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Docomo Pacific opens new Micronesia Mall location

TAMUNING, Guam—Docomo Pacific, the regional leader in innovation, telecommunications, and entertainment, has relocated within Micronesia Mall.

Find the new Docomo Pacific store in Concourse 4, Level 1, across Macy's Men at the Micronesia Mall, Dededo, Guam.

"Our history with Micronesia Mall goes back nearly 20 years, with this relocation and renovation being our most important to date. We have grown with The Mall and with our customers. This project demonstrates our commitment to deliver the best-fit telecommunications solutions with an unmatched customer experience," said Docomo Pacific vice president for Brand and Customer Experience Dee Perez-Damian. "Our customers and associates are at the heart of everything we do. We designed the space with their input. "

Here are a few facts about our new Micronesia Mall Location:

■ The store features an open-concept layout of approx. 3,100 sq.ft. Floor to ceiling windows wrap around the space providing full visibility in and around the store.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Future World Corp. owner Richard Chi, Rim Architects principal/owner Christine Wolke, Docomo Pacific Customer Experience and Brand vice president Dee Perez-Damain, Dededo Mayor Melissa Savares, Our Lady of Lourdes Yigo Church Father Paul Gofigan, Sen. Joe San Augustin, Docomo Pacific chief legal officer James Hofman, Micronesia Mall chief executive officer Gigi Tan-Yu, Docomo Pacific Consumer Business Unit executive vice president Tom Valderrama, Docomo Pacific Enterprise Business Unit executive vice president Marilyn Borja, Docomo Pacific chief of People Operations Francene Paulino, Docomo Pacific Facilities supervisor and Security coordinator Lisa Manglona, Docomo Pacific senior vice president Hiromichi Oodaira, Retail Operations manager Jena Manibusan, and Docomo Pacific Sales Operations manager Connie Cruz.

■ An island first, it has a 10x10 LED "Wall" made up of 28 borderless Samsung TVs that come together to form one seamless image. Innovation inspires people to think beyond the present. This Wall can be used in many ways to display exciting content on the island.

■ Handset displays now have wireless security devices allowing customers to experience without wired limitations.

■ New product bars provide a flexible way for customers to explore products and enjoy a clear view of The Samsung Wall, while waiting for service.

■ Customers have options on how and where they would like to be served. With the use of Microsoft Surface Pro tablets, Docomo Pacific associates can serve throughout the store —at the two product bars or three floating stations. Customers who prefer a more private setting can opt for one of four customer service banquettes.

■ Easy-to-navigate interactive displays to showcase mobile, internet and entertainment services.

■ Multiple ways to quickly serve customers for an in-and-out experience. Cashier payment booths, a Mobile Prepaid vending machine, and a free charging station.

■ Connected Life Zone, showcasing products that connect as one family through our Docomo Pacific network.

■ Kid Zone equipped with toys, books, and a large TV.

■ Finally, Docomo Pacific would like to introduce its newly hired robot delivery and reception assistant Ketty Bot. The island's first robot assistant comes fully equipped to give our customers a unique experience. Be on the lookout for more news coming in the next week

The Micronesia Mall opening was commemorated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and blessing by Father Paul Gofigan from Yigo Church last Dec. 16.

Docomo Pacific wants to thank the following vendors for helping with the completion of the project: general contractor Future World Corporation, RIM Architects, Samsung Electronics, M80 Systems, G4s, AI Technologies, Hafa Adai signs, and the Micronesia Mall management.

Docomo Pacific held its grand opening last Saturday, Dec. 19. There was live-entertainment, limited-time offers, giveaways, and store tours guided by our team. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BID
CUC-IFB-23-003

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF MEDIUM-DUTY BOOM TRUCK VEHICLE

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the supply and delivery of a medium-duty boom truck for the Power Plant in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-IFB-23-003, Supply and Delivery of a Medium Duty Boom Truck"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 4, 2023** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before the due date and time or post-marked before the submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on December 19, 2022,** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with copies to Jubal Slayer, CUC's Technical Manager for Oil via email at jubal.slayer@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Nation

ACROSS THE NATION

Texas mayor declares state of emergency over migrant swell

EL PASO, Texas (AP)—The mayor of a Texas border city declared a state of emergency Saturday over concerns about the community's ability to handle an anticipated influx of migrants across the Southern border.

El Paso Mayor Oscar Leeser issued the state of emergency declaration to allow the city on the U.S. border with Mexico to tap into additional resources that are expected to become necessary after Title 42 expulsions end on Dec. 21, the El Paso Times reported.

Leeser had previously resisted issuing an emergency declaration, but said he was moved to action by the sight of people on downtown streets with temperatures dipping below freezing, the Times reported.

"That's not the way we want to treat people," Leeser said during a news conference Saturday evening.

A ruling Friday by the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals means restrictions that have prevented hundreds of thousands of migrants from seeking asylum in the U.S. in recent years are still set to be lifted Wednesday, unless further appeals are filed.

Leeser added that the increase would be "incredible" after Wednesday, when daily apprehensions and street releases could reach up to 6,000 per day, the Times reported.

McCarthy's race for speaker risks upending House on Day One

WASHINGTON (AP)—In his quest to rise to House speaker, Kevin McCarthy is charging straight into history — potentially becoming the first nominee in 100 years unable to win the job on a first-round floor vote.

The increasingly real prospect of a messy fight over the speaker's gavel on Day One of the new Congress on Jan. 3 is worrying House Republicans, who are bracing for the spectacle. They have been meeting endlessly in private at the Capitol trying to resolve the standoff.

Taking hold of a perilously slim 222-seat Republican majority in the 435-member House and facing a handful of defectors, McCarthy is working furiously to reach the 218-vote threshold typically needed to become speaker.

"The fear is, that if we stumble out of the gate," said Rep. Jim Banks, R-Ind., a McCarthy ally, then the voters who sent the Republicans to Washington "will revolt over that and they will feel let down."

2 minors killed, 3 wounded in shootout at Atlanta apartment

Two teenage boys were shot dead and three more minors were wounded in a shootout at an Atlanta apartment complex Saturday that police said originated as a dispute online.

Officers responded to the complex in the city's southwest shortly after 5 p.m. Two victims were pronounced dead at the scene, and the others were hospitalized for treatment.

Deputy Chief Charles Hampton Jr. told reporters that the dead were two boys, ages 14 and 16, and the wounded were two boys, 11 and 15, and a 15-year-old girl.

"We know that there was some type of dispute on social media that escalated to gunfire," Hampton said. "One group of individuals came to the apartment with their guns and then the other group fired their weapons."

Asked whether the incident could be characterized as a shootout, Hampton said that would be a fair assessment since "multiple people were shooting."***(AP)***

Famed LA cougar P-22 euthanized following health problems

LOS ANGELES (AP)—P-22, the celebrated mountain lion that took up residence in the middle of Los Angeles and became a symbol of urban pressures on wildlife, was euthanized Saturday after dangerous changes in his behavior led to examinations that revealed worsening health and injuries likely caused by a car.

Officials with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife said the decision to euthanize the beloved big cat was made after veterinarians determined it had a skull fracture and chronic illnesses including a skin infection and diseases of the kidneys and liver.

"His prognosis was deemed poor," said the agency's director, Chuck Bonham, who fought back tears during a news conference announcing the cougar's death. "This really hurts ... it's been an incredibly difficult several days."

The animal became the face of the campaign to build a wildlife crossing over a Los Angeles-area freeway to give mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, deer and other animals a safe path between the nearby Santa Monica Mountains and wildlands to the north.

Bond set at $50K for father of July 4 shooting suspect

CHICAGO (AP)—A judge on Saturday set bond at $50,000 for the father of an Illinois man charged with killing seven people at a July 4 parade who is accused of helping his son get a gun license years before the shooting on a suburban Chicago main street.

Robert Crimo Jr., 58, looked somber and tired in his first appearance before a judge since voluntarily surrendering to police Friday. His lawyer, George M. Gomez, told the judge Saturday that the father of three would be able to pay the required bond amount for his release.

Crimo, a rare case of a parent charged after a child is accused in a mass shooting, faces seven felony counts of reckless conduct — one count for each person fatally shot during the summertime parade. Each count carries a maximum three-year prison term.

At a brief 10-minute hearing, conducted via video link, Lake County Judge Jacquelyn Melius said she accepted an agreement between Crimo's lawyer and prosecutors that bond be set at $50,000, which was lower than the $500,000 bond that could have been imposed.

Oppenheimer wrongly stripped of security clearance, US says

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Biden administration has reversed a decades-old decision to revoke the security clearance of Robert Oppenheimer, the physicist called the father of the atomic bomb for his leading role in World War II's Manhattan Project.

U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said the 1954 decision by the Atomic Energy Commission was made using a "flawed process" that violated the commission's own regulations.

"As time has passed, more evidence has come to light of the bias and unfairness of the process that Dr. Oppenheimer was subjected to while the evidence of his loyalty and love of country have only been further affirmed," Granholm said in a statement on Friday.

Oppenheimer, who died in 1967, led the Manhattan Project, which developed the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. The theoretical physicist was later accused of having communist sympathies and his security clearance was revoked following a four-week, closed-door hearing.

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BID
CUC-IFB-23-005

Sewer Main and Manhole Replacement Project (Tanapag, Capitol Hill and Oleai)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Sewer Main and Manhole Replacement (Tanapag, Capitol Hill and Oleai) in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists of the installation of gravity sewer main, new service laterals, connection to existing service laterals, and the installation of sewer manholes.

The project is funded by a grant from the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act (ASADRA) and CUC. The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from ASADRA.

CUC requires the project to be completed in **365 calendar** days from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **December 6, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No. 17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-23-002, Sewer Main and Manhole Replacement Project (Tanapag, Capitol Hill and Oleai)"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 20, 2022,** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the Unites States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 8, 2022** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org, with a copy to Larry Manacop, Acting Chief Engineer for Water/Wastewater via email at larry.manacop@cucgov.org, Joel Puyat, Water/Wastewater Engineer via email at joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Technician via email address at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BID
CUC-IFB-23-012

Carbon Change Out of Granular Activated Carbon Filters (10 Sites)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for Carbon Change Out of Granular Activated Carbon Filters (10 Sites) in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The intent of the contract is for the Contractor to provide all labor, equipment, supplies, and materials necessary for the removal and installation of GAC and Gravel media replacement, disposal of spent GAC and Gravel media, possible sample collection, transportation, and the possible supply of gravel media, analyses of spent media, and additional waste containers/drums for disposal, if necessary. CUC requires the Project to be completed in 180 calendar days from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of **$200.00** (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **December 28, 2022 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "**CUC-IFB-23-012, Carbon Change Out of Granular Activated Carbon Filters (10 Sites)"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 17, 2023,** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the Unites States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. A Payment Bond of One Hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (ChST) on January 4, 2023** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email address nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org and to Christie Sablan, P&S, Senior Administrative Technician – christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

World

Dead boy pulled from rubble of latest Russian hit on Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Emergency crews pulled the body of a toddler from the rubble in a pre-dawn search Saturday for survivors of a Russian missile strike that tore through an apartment building in the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih.

The missile was one of what Ukrainian authorities said were 16 that eluded air defenses among the 76 missiles fired Friday in the latest Russian attack targeting Ukrainian energy infrastructure, part of Moscow's strategy to leave Ukrainian civilians and soldiers in the dark and cold this winter.

Gov. Valentyn Reznichenko of the Dnipropetrovsk region, where Kryvyi Rih is located, wrote on the Telegram social media app that "rescuers retrieved the body of a 1-1/2-year-old boy from under the rubble of a house destroyed by a Russian rocket." In all, four people were killed in the strike, and 13 injured — four of them children — authorities said.

Reznichenko said the pounding from Russian forces continued overnight, damaging power lines and houses in the cities and towns of Nikopol, Marhanets and Chervonohryhorivka, which are across the Dnieper River from the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

By Saturday morning, Ukraine's military leadership said Russian forces had fired more than a score of further missiles since the barrage a day earlier. It did not say how many of those might have been stopped by the air defenses.

Friday's onslaught, which pummeled many parts of central, eastern and southern Ukraine, constituted one of the biggest assaults on the capital, Kyiv, since Russia began the war by attacking Ukraine on Feb. 24. Kyiv came under fire from about 40 missiles on Friday, authorities said, nearly all intercepted by air defenses.

In Kherson, where Ukraine regained control last month in a significant setback for Russia, a 36-year-old man was killed and a 70-year-old woman was wounded in a Russian attack on Saturday, said regional governor Yaroslav Yanushevych.

Yet again, Ukrainian utility crews have had to scramble to patch up damaged power and water systems as Russia targets vital services for civilians as winter's hardships set in.

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko reported Saturday that two-thirds of homes in the country's capital had been reconnected to electricity and all had regained access to water. The subway system also resumed service, after serving as a shelter the day before.

Half of the Kyiv province, which surrounds but doesn't include the Ukrainian capital, still lacked electricity a day after Friday's attack, Regional Gov. Oleksiy Kuleba said, adding that rain and snow, making power lines icy, was complicating efforts to restore power.

The head of Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv province Oleh Syniehubov said Saturday that electricity had been restored to the entire region, including Kharkiv city, the country's second-largest metropolis. The power had been knocked out on Friday in attacks involving 10 S-300 missiles.

In Kryvyi Rih, 596 miners were stuck underground because of missile strikes, but all were eventually rescued, Mayor Oleksandr Vilkul said late Friday.

Peru's dark past surfaces as young protester is laid to rest

QUINUA, Peru (AP)—This rural hamlet nestled high in the Peruvian Andes was the site of a major battle that secured South America's independence from Spain in the 19th century.

But on Saturday, the streets of Quinua were overrun by weeping residents commemorating a far more senseless loss: the death of Clemer Rojas, a 23-year-old student who left his parents' home Thursday to protest the ousting of President Pedro Castillo and never returned.

A funeral procession of a few thousand peasant farmers, led by a steady drumbeat and people speaking in their native Quechua language, carried Rojas' casket draped in Peru's red and white flag to a colonial church where a mass was celebrated, and he was later buried in a nearby cemetery. Interspersed amid the crowd were signs calling for the closure of Congress and denouncing caretaker President Dina Boluarte as an "assassin."

"My son is leaving. Tell me he's not leaving," Nilda Garcia, a street vendor, wailed as friends and family members struggled to keep her from falling down.

Rojas died in clashes with the army in the nearby provincial capital of Ayacucho, which has emerged as an unlikely epicenter of unrest in Peru's still unfolding political crisis. The tumult was triggered by Castillo's attempt to close Congress — a futile act of gamesmanship widely condemned by the U.S. and others as a self-coup but seen here, in Peru's long-neglected countryside, as a pride-filled display of defiance against a hostile establishment that never allowed the former rural school teacher to govern since his shock victory 17 months ago.

Boluarte has tried to quell the protests, emphasizing her own humble roots and support for protesters' demands that elections, scheduled for 2026, be pushed up to next year. At a news conference Saturday, Peru's first female president delivered extensive remarks in Quechua — a foreign language to past Peruvian presidents — comparing the highway blockades, acts of arson and violent protests engulfing Peru to the invisible, emotional damage suffered by children growing up in a broken home with constantly feuding parents.

"Didn't you see me walking across the country, filling plazas and looking for votes among brothers and sisters?" said Boluarte, who served as Castillo's running mate and only broke with him following his attempt to dissolve Congress. "Then why this violence in the streets? I didn't look to be here. I tried to protect him as much as I could."

Authorities blame the bloodshed in Ayacucho on a horde of young protesters who on Thursday attacked an army patrol with sharp objects, explosives and homemade weapons as it was racing toward the airport to break up an unruly crowd.

Nine people died that day — more than a third of the total deaths reported nationwide — as soldiers hustled from the barracks as part of a 30-day state of emergency and indiscriminately fired tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammo into large crowds.

In a tragic irony, Rojas was killed by a fellow conscript's bullet. Like his father, he joined the army as part of military service for Peruvian men that is mandatory in name only: most of the draftees, like Rojas, are teenagers hailing from impoverished, Quechua-speaking homes.

"He wasn't armed," says his father, Reider Rojas, who was dressed in black. "They fired at point-blank range. The autopsy said a bullet fired by a Galil rifle used by the army pierced his liver and lungs."

COVID-linked deaths seen in Beijing after virus rules eased

BEIJING (AP)—Outside a funeral home in eastern Beijing, dozens of people were bundled up in parkas and hats against the freezing temperatures Friday evening as workers in full protective suits wheeled out coffins one by one.

When an employee with a clipboard shouted the name of the dead, a relative trundled up to the coffin to examine the body. One of the relatives told The Associated Press their loved one had been infected with COVID-19.

Deaths linked to the coronavirus are appearing in Beijing after weeks of China reporting no fatalities, even as the country is seeing a surge of cases.

That surge comes as the government last week dramatically eased some of the world's strictest COVID-19 containment measures. On Wednesday, the government said it would stop reporting asymptomatic COVID-19 cases since they've become impossible to track with mass testing no longer required.

That halt in reporting made it unclear how fast the virus is spreading. Social media posts, business closures and other anecdotal evidence suggest huge numbers of infections.

It's also unclear how many people are dying from the virus. An AP reporter who visited the Dongjiao Funeral home was told by relatives that at least two people cremated there had died after testing positive.

Health authorities had designated Dongjiao and one other funeral home to cremate those who die after testing positive, according to a relative of one of the dead. The woman said her elderly relative had fallen ill in early December, tested positive, and died Friday morning in an emergency ward.

She said there were lots of people in the emergency ward who had tested positive for COVID-19, adding that there weren't enough nurses to take care of them. The woman did not want to be identified for fear of retribution.

Over about an hour, an AP reporter saw about a dozen bodies wheeled from the Dongjiao funeral home.

About a half-dozen people inside described how another victim had struggled to breathe that morning before dying, and the death certificate listed "pneumonia" as the cause of death, even after a positive test for COVID-19, one of those people said. The people interviewed did not want to be identified for fear of retribution.

Three employees of shops in the complex that houses the funeral home said there had been a marked increase in the number of people going there in recent days. One estimated about 150 bodies were being cremated daily, up from what is normally a few dozen a day.

One employee attributed it to the coronavirus, although another said there are usually more deaths with the arrival of winter. The employees did not want to be identified for fear of retribution.

China has not reported a death from COVID-19 since Dec. 4.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
(THIS IS AD IS PAID FOR NMHC WITH HUD FUNDS)

NMHC IFB 2023-002
BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: January 13, 2023, 2:00 p.m.

Vehicle Lease of 3-Pick-up Trucks for the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

Bid information and packet is available on December 13, 2022, at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement Tab" or at the CDBG-DR website at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

Inquiries regarding this bid shall be submitted to Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net or facsimile at (670)234-9021, on or before December 23, 2022, no later than 10 a.m.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

/s/
Merced "Marcie" M. Tomokane
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
(THIS IS AD IS PAID FOR NMHC WITH HUD FUNDS)

NMHC RFP 2023-001
BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: January 13, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

Architect-Engineer Services for the Construction of New Classroom Buildings for the Northern Marianas College (NMC)

The Request for Proposals and Scope of Work are available on December 13, 2022, at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net and at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com by clicking on the "Procurement Tab".

Inquiries regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing or email to Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer at officemanager@nmhcgov.net or submitted by facsimile to (670)234-9021 no later than 9:00 a.m. local time on December 28, 2022.

This procurement is in accordance with the NMHC Procurement Regulations. Proposal procedures shall be in full compliance with NMIAC §§ 100-60-210 (Competitive Sealed Proposal) and 100-60-305 (Architect-Engineer Services) of the NMHC Procurement Regulations. The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

Mandatory Pre-proposal Conference will be held at the NMHC Central Office Conference Room, Garapan, Saipan, on December 28, 2022, 10 a.m. local time. Failure to attend the Mandatory Pre-proposal conference will be considered a non-responsive offeror.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer, at (670)234- 6866/9447 or email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

/s/
Merced "Marcie" M. Tomokane
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

Health & Wellness

This advertorial is sponsored by Tan Holdings HEALTH IS WEALTH Tan Siu Lin Foundation

Why should I be evaluated for a penicillin allergy?

Taking action to be evaluated for a penicillin allergy can impact your health, safety and wallet. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 10% of the U.S. population reports a penicillin allergy, but less than 1% is allergic after testing. Common penicillins include ampicillin, amoxicillin and Augmentin.

Penicillin allergy is an abnormal reaction of your immune system to the antibiotic drug prescribed for treating various bacterial infections. These medications are used often to treat ear infections, strep throat, sinus infections and to prevent dental infections.

Common signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction can include skin redness, itching, rash or swelling. These symptoms can occur for other reasons. Some symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, are common when taking antibiotics. They frequently are misdiagnosed as an allergy.

When a penicillin allergy is reported, health care professionals substitute different antibiotics, often using more expensive and less effective antibiotics. Penicillins are the safest and most effective antibiotics for many infections.

Avoiding penicillin antibiotics is associated with higher health care costs, increased risk for antibiotic resistance and less effective antibiotic therapy.

Potential benefits of penicillin allergy evaluation

People with a penicillin allergy have their allergy removed with allergy testing more than 90% of the time. Because penicillin allergy often does not persist for life, patients with severe penicillin allergy histories often are able to retake this medication safely if directed by a health care professional.

Approximately 80% of patients with a severe penicillin allergy lose their sensitivity after 10 years. Determining that a patient is not actually allergic to a medication can allow for better treatment options, targeted therapy, and a decrease in hospital stays and medication costs.

Who should be evaluated for a penicillin allergy?

Any patient with a history of a reaction to a penicillin antibiotic, including amoxicillin and Augmentin, or who does not use certain antibiotics out of concern for such reactions should be evaluated. The best time to be evaluated for an allergy is when you are healthy.

Discussing medication allergies can be a part of routine health maintenance with your primary care team. Addressing medication allergies also is good to do before having surgery and for women considering pregnancy. Pregnant women can be safely evaluated for a penicillin allergy.

What to expect during penicillin allergy testing

A health care professional will use an FDA-approved skin test to diagnose penicillin allergy. Penicillin skin testing involves pricking the skin, placing a small amount of allergen on the punctured skin and injecting a small amount between the layers of the skin. The test sites are examined for a reaction. If the testing is negative, the patient can safely undergo an oral challenge to amoxicillin.

In an oral challenge, amoxicillin is given to confirm that the patient can safely take the medication. The evaluation process takes three hours. In low-risk people, an oral challenge can be performed without skin testing.

If you have questions about penicillin allergy and evaluation, talk with your primary care team or an allergy specialist.

Adela Taylor, M.D., sees patients in Allergy & Asthma, in Eau C l aire, Wisconsin. ***(Mayo Clinic News Network)***

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2023

THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS PAID FOR BY NMHC WITH CPD FUNDS.

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, through the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is announcing the availability of an estimated $1,576,020.00 in Community Planning and Development (CPD) funds available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. NMHC anticipates receiving an estimated amount of $980,125.00 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); $515,489.00 in Home Investment Partnerships (HOME); and, $80,406.00 in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds for Program Year (PY) 2023.

The CDBG funds, authorized under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, may be used for a wide range of community development activities to revitalize neighborhoods, provide affordable housing, expand economic opportunities, and improve community facilities and services. However, use of these funds must meet at least one of the national objectives which include: 1) to benefit low and moderate-income families; 2) to eliminate slum or blight conditions; or 3) to meet other urgent community development needs.

The CDBG program requires a grant recipient to certify that it will minimize displacement of persons as a result of activities assisted with CDBG funds. The CNMI government does not plan on undertaking any activity which will cause displacement of person. In the event of any unforeseen displacement resulting from any CDBG funded activity, the CNMI government will comply with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, its implementing regulation and applicable local law.

HOME funds may be used to create affordable housing through financing assistance, site acquisition or improvement, and rehabilitating existing residential dwellings as well as providing funds for new construction or purchase of a single-family residential dwelling. Use of HOME funds must benefit low-income families.

ESG funds may be used to rehabilitate or convert to buildings into homeless shelters and for shelter operating expenses, supportive services and homeless prevention and rapid re-housing activities. Use of ESG funds must benefit the homeless.

Applications for the use of CPD funds are available for pick up at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) located in Garapan, Saipan; San Jose Village, Tinian; and, Songsong Village, Rota, beginning December 19, 2022.

You may also obtain the application online at www.nmhcgov.net in the section titled "Public Notice/Announcement" subsection "Community Planning Development"

Applications must be submitted to the NMHC Offices in Garapan, Saipan (Saipan Residents); San Jose, Tinian (Tinian Residents); and, Songsong Village, Rota (Rota Residents) by **March 20, 2023, no later than 4:30 p.m. Applications submitted after March 20, 2023, will not be accepted.**

A briefing will be conducted for interested applicants and for those applicants who have picked up an application for the use of CPD funds. The briefing will address the program requirements and regulations concerning the usage of CPD funds.

The schedules for briefing are as follows:

February 13, 2023, 6:00 p.m. for the island of Saipan
February 14, 2023, 6:00 p.m. for the island of Tinian
February 16, 2023 6:00 p.m. for the island of Rota

We are encouraging all non-profit, for profit, and government service providers who are providing services to people with disabilities, homeless individuals, and emergency shelter administrators and operators to attend this briefing.

For residents living on the island of Saipan, the briefing will held at the NMHC Office in Garapan; Residents living on the island of Tinian, the briefing will be held at the NMHC Office at the NMC Campus, Building A; and Residents living on the island of Rota, the briefing will be held at the Rota Mayor's Office Conference Room in Tatachog.

Accommodations for disabled individuals or other non-English speaking individuals who wish to attend the briefing are available upon request by giving at least 24 hours notice prior to the meeting so that such needs can be arranged and provided. Additional inquiries, concerning the CPD program, may be directed to Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Ms. Tricia Tenorio, Planner at 234-6866 or 234-9447.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

MAYO CLINIC MINUTE

How to prevent injuries when playing pickleball

By JASON HOWLAND
MAYO CLINIC NEWS NETWORK

The game of pickleball is surging in popularity across the country. It can be played at any age and skill level. While many might assume that pickleball is a slower, lower-impact sport, experts at Mayo Clinic say it's important to remember that injuries from playing pickleball can and do happen.

"P" is for pickleball. And Mayo Clinic hand and wrist surgeon Dr. Sanj Kakar says there are four other P's that players should remember to avoid injury.

"No. 1: You have to have proper stretching. When we get on the pickleball court, we think it's a smaller court. It's a slower sport. We don't have to stretch. And forget about hand and wrist injuries, we see so many Achilles tendon injuries," says Dr. Kakar. "Proper stretching starts from the feet up. And that includes the lower extremities, the back, the neck and the upper extremities."

"No. 2: You have to practice with a purpose. Rather than spending an hour on the court with repetitive, repetitive, repetitive — that leads to chronic injuries, chronic use, chronic overuse."

"No. 3: You have to have proper equipment. Do they have the appropriate paddle? Is the grip thick enough? As we get older, for example, when we pinch, that puts further areas of stress on the hand. And, so, when you're squeezing so hard, it can lead to increased pressure on the wrist."

"And finally, and probably most importantly, is proper mechanics because the ball doesn't bounce as high, when they're actually going for the ball. The motion is actually more violent than, I would say, tennis."

Can colorectal cancer be prevented?

By DEB BALZER
MAYO CLINIC NEWS NETWORK

Regular screening is one of the most important ways to prevent colorectal cancer (colon and rectal).

"Colorectal cancer is the third-leading cause of cancer death in the U.S. And we expect about 50,000 people will die this year from colorectal cancer," says Dr. Lisa Boardman, a Mayo Clinic gastroenterologist.

Everyone at age 45 is recommended to begin regular screening. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force updated its guidelines in 2021 to include starting screening five years earlier than the previous recommendation of 50, after studies showed increased rates of cancer in younger people.

"What we're seeing now is more people developing colorectal cancer under the age of 50. In fact, 10% of colorectal cancer cases now are going to occur in people who are under the age of 50," says Dr. Boardman.

Those at higher risk include African Americans, those with a family history of colorectal cancer or a genetic mutation that causes one of several hereditary conditions associated with the development of colorectal cancer. Certain health conditions like inflammatory bowel disease may also increase a person's risk. It's important to talk with your health care team to determine when to begin screening.

The goal for colorectal cancer screening is to identify colorectal cancer at an early stage before a person develops symptoms to increase a person's chances to be cured. Another benefit of screening it to find precancerous polyps and remove them so that they do not have the chance to turn to cancer.

There are multiple types of screening options, but colonoscopy is the most common screening test.

During a colonoscopy, a long, flexible tube, called a colonoscope, is inserted into the rectum. A tiny video camera at the tip of the tube allows your health care professional to detect changes or abnormalities inside the entire colon.

Your doctor may remove a polyp during a colonoscopy. Not all colon polyps develop into cancer, but most colon cancers begin as polyps.

Types of screening and recommended intervals include:

—Fecal immunochemical test (FIT), annually.

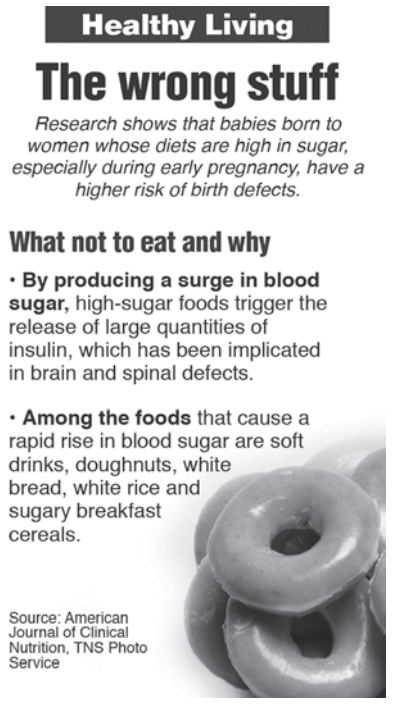
—High-sensitivity guaiac-based fecal occult blood test (HSgFOBT), annually.

—Multitarget stool DNA (MT-sDNA) test, every three years.

—Colonoscopy, every 10 years.

—CT colonography (CTC), every five years.

—Flexible sigmoidoscopy (FS), every five years.


Healthy Living
The wrong stuff
Research shows that babies born to women whose diets are high in sugar, especially during early pregnancy, have a higher risk of birth defects.
What not to eat and why
• By producing a surge in blood sugar, high-sugar foods trigger the release of large quantities of insulin, which has been implicated in brain and spinal defects.
• Among the foods that cause a rapid rise in blood sugar are soft drinks, doughnuts, white bread, white rice and sugary breakfast cereals.
Source: American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, TNS Photo Service

Life & Style

Angelina Jolie leaves role as UN refugee agency envoy

UNITED NATIONS (AP)— Angelina Jolie and the United Nations' refugee agency are parting ways after more than two decades.

In a joint statement issued Friday, the U.S. actor and the agency announced she was "moving on" from her role as the agency's special envoy "to engage on a broader set of humanitarian and human rights issues."

"I will continue to do everything in my power in the years to come to support refugees and other displaced people," Jolie was quoted as saying in the statement, adding that she felt it was time "to work differently" by directly engaging with refugees and local organizations.

Jolie first started working with the U.N. refugee agency in 2001 and was appointed its special envoy in 2012. The release described the multi-hyphenate as "carrying out more than 60 field missions to bear witness to stories of suffering as well as hope and resilience."

"After a long and successful time with UNHCR, I appreciate her desire to shift her engagement and support her decision," U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi was quoted as saying. "I know the refugee cause will remain close to her heart, and I am certain she will bring the same passion and attention to a wider humanitarian portfolio."

In an opinion piece published in The Guardian last month, Jolie alluded to frustration with the lack of global progress in ending sexual violence in conflict.

AP

Angelina Jolie, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees specialenvoy, address a meeting on U.N. peacekeeping at U.N. headquarters on March 29, 2019.

"We meet and discuss these horrors and agree that they should never be allowed to happen again. We promise to draw—and to hold—that line. But when it comes to hard choices about how to implement these promises, we run into the same problems time and again," she wrote, specifically calling out U.N. Security Council members for "abusing their veto power."

Jolie previously characterized the United Nations as "imperfect" during a 2017 speech in Geneva, but also defended the international body and said it needed to be supported.

She later pressed the United Nations to create a permanent and independent investigative body to amass and evaluate evidence in cases regarding alleged war crimes, crimes against humanity and other human rights violations. While promoting that effort at U.N. headquarters in 2019, she told the AP that promoting equality for women, combatting injustice, and helping refugees were the most important parts of her life after her children.

"But in many ways, they go hand in hand," she said. Jolie has been involved in other advocacy efforts, recently pushing for the renewal of the Violence Against Women Act in the U.S.

Jolie began visiting refugee camps in 2001, and was appointed as a UNHCR goodwill ambassador that same year. At the time, the then-high commissioner said he hoped the then-26-year-old actress could direct young people's attention to the plight of refugees.

Iran authorities arrest actress of Oscar-winning movie

CAIRO (AP)— Iranian authorities arrested one of the country's most renowned actresses Saturday on charges of spreading falsehoods about nationwide protests that grip the country, state media said.

Alidoosti

The report by IRNA said Taraneh Alidoosti, star of the Oscar-winning movie "The Salesman," was detained a week after she made a post on Instagram expressing solidarity with the first man recently executed for crimes allegedly committed during the protests.

The announcement is the latest in a series of celebrity arrests, that have included footballers, actors and influencers, in response to their open display of support for anti-government demonstrations now in their third month.

According to the report published on the state media's official Telegram channel, Alidoosti was arrested because she did not provide ''any documents in line with her claims."

It said that several other Iranian celebrities had also "been summoned by the judiciary body over publishing provocative content," and that some had been arrested. It provided no further details.

In her post, the 38-year-old actress said: ''His name was Mohsen Shekari. Every international organization who is watching this bloodshed and not taking action, is a disgrace to humanity."

Shekari was executed Dec. 9 after being charged by an Iranian court with blocking a street in Tehran and attacking a member of the country's security forces with a machete.

In November, Hengameh Ghaziani and Katayoun Riahi, two other famous Iranian actresses, were arrested by authorities for expressing solidarity with protesters on social media. Voria Ghafouri, an Iranian soccer player, was also arrested last month for ''insulting the national soccer team and propagandizing against the government." All three have been released.

Since September, Alidoosti has openly expressed solidarity with protesters in at least three posts on Instagram. Her account, which had some 8 million followers, has been suspended.

Last Week, Iran executed a second prisoner, Majidreza Rahnavard, in connection with the protests. Rahnavard's body was left hanging from a construction crane as a gruesome warning to others. Iranian authorities alleged Rahnavard stabbed two members of its paramilitary force.

Both Shekari and Rahnavard were executed less than a month after they were charged, underscoring the speed at which Iran now carries out death sentences imposed for alleged crimes related to the demonstrations. Activists say at least a dozen people have been sentenced to death in closed-door hearings. Iran is one of the one the world's top executioners.

Iran has been rocked by protests since the Sept. 16 death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who died after being detained by the morality police. The protests have since morphed into one of the most serious challenges to Iran's theocracy installed by the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Man's cheating shatters wife's sense of purpose

DEAR ABBY: My husband of 2 1/2 years was having an affair with a much younger woman for what I believe was about two months. I never suspected. It ended because he got caught. I was devastated and asked him to leave that night. He always seemed uninterested in sex, and when we had sex, it was quick. He had difficulty performing so, of course, I was extra shocked.

We went to marriage counseling, which didn't help. I decided to stay with him, but I'm miserable. I can't get over the fact that he cheated, and I bring it up all the time. I no longer trust him and wonder why I stay. I love him and I don't at the same time. I feel stuck.

I was married before, and I feel like a failure. I'm in good physical shape, financially successful and loving. What went wrong? I always felt he was hiding something, but he swears he wasn't. He says this was the first time he's cheated on a woman and he was confused. I wish I had the courage to leave, but I feel defeated because I just turned 60. Please help.

DEPRESSED AND HOPELESS IN INDIANA

DEAR D and H: You are not a failure. Your husband is. The surest way to find out "what went wrong" and begin rebuilding your self-esteem would be to discuss this entire scenario BY YOURSELF with a licensed marriage and family therapist. The reason you haven't left this marriage may be that you are self-conscious about your age or think nothing is worse than being alone. Life does not end at 60, and THIS is worse than being alone.

Iran authorities arrest actress of Oscar-winning movie■■■

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 55-year-old male with five siblings ranging from 45 to 63 years of age. I'm the only one who is single. I don't live close to any of them, although they live reasonably close to each other. I'm in regular contact with all of them and see them at least once a year.

My issue is that I'm tired of hearing about all their family drama. They all seem to be upset with one family member or another for whatever ridiculous reason. How can I remind them that having each other around is a blessing? Living alone on the other side of the country is (admittedly) very lonely.

I plan on retiring in the next couple of years and had always thought I'd move closer to them then. But now I'm afraid of becoming one of the pawns in their "who are we all mad at this month?" game. Advice?

BROTHER WITH A DIFFERENCE

DEAR BROTHER: Few families are completely free of "issues," but successful ones manage to maneuver around them. Reminding your siblings how fortunate they are to have each other so close geographically should be raised privately with each of them, so you can explain your reasons for saying it. It might be the wake-up call they need. Use the next two years to decide where you want to live without being "too close," and plan on cultivating relationships outside the family through activities you enjoy so you are not completely dependent on them.

■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

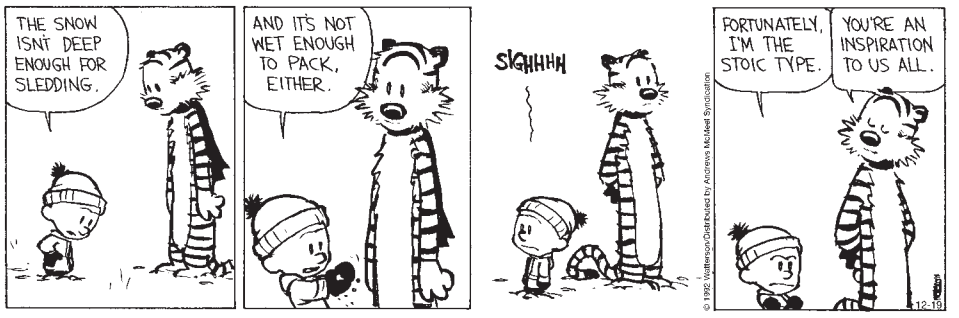
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


THE SNOW ISN'T DEEP ENOUGH FOR SLEDDING.
AND IT'S NOT WET ENOUGH TO PACK, EITHER.
SIGHHHH
FORTUNATELY, I'M THE STOIC TYPE.
YOU'RE AN INSPIRATION TO US ALL.
© 1992 Watterson/Distributed by Andrews McMeel Syndication
12-19

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

THERE YOU GO!
YOU SHOULD WEAR A TIE FOR THE HOLIDAYS!
JUST A SUGGESTION
JIM DAVIS 12-19
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Distributed by Andrews McMeel Syndication

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

DAD, CAN YOU HELP ME WRAP SOME GIFTS?
OH. UM...
HONEY, THAT MIGHT BE A BAD CALL.
I'M WHAT SOME EXPERTS REFER TO AS "WRAPPING CHALLENGED."
WRAPPING CHALLENGED?
YEAH. I'M ACTUALLY BANNED FROM MOST HALLMARK STORES.
www.gocomics.com
©2022 Andrews McMeel
MARRELL
12-19

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

WELL, I FINISHED ALL MY CHRISTMAS SHOPPING EARLY.
DO YOU WANNA KNOW WHAT I NEED?
A LIFE?
12-19
Glenn McCoy
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CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Furry foot
4 Astern
7 Heavy mists
11 "Wild Blue Yonder" mil. group
13 Fan's cry
14 Pet food brand
15 iPhone voice
16 Hosp. scan
17 "Phooey!"
18 "The Creation" composer
20 Blend
22 German article
24 Catlike
28 Really rich
32 Salami variety
33 Plot unit
34 One of us
36 Commotion
37 "Star Trek" genre
39 Public speakers
41 Intellectual stickler
43 Roman 56
44 Scurry
46 Brilliance
50 Ballot dangler
53 Help
55 Hardy cabbage
56 Survey
57 Enjoy the Alps
58 Lushes
59 Lariat
60 Trendy
61 Malia, to Sasha

DOWN

1 Word on a door
2 Pakistan's continent
3 Cautious
4 Branch
5 Mac-Donald's place
6 Pilferer
7 "Nonsense!"
8 Galley item
9 "Today" rival, briefly
10 Retired jet
12 Nonsense
19 Rebellion leader Turner
21 Piano support
23 Bashful
25 Grooving on
26 Pinot —
27 Jug handles
28 Stinging insect
29 Caesar's "Behold!"
30 Desert-like
31 Designer Jenny
35 Web address
38 Pig-poke link
40 "Hail, Caesar!"
42 Dumpster filler
45 Polynesian carving
47 Cambodia neighbor
48 Choir voices
49 Hardy heroine
50 EMT's skill
51 "Yoo- —!"
52 Jungfrau, for one
54 Chips go-with

Solution time: 26 mins.

A	D	L	A	I	■	T	I	P	■	S	A	S
G	O	U	L	D	■	U	S	E	■	T	N	T
O	N	C	U	E	■	P	A	I	S	A	N	O
■	■	I	M	A	G	E	S	■	T	R	I	O
M	I	A	■	S	A	L	■	E	A	S	E	D
U	S	N	A	■	B	O	A	R	D	■	■	■
G	R	O	V	E	L	■	I	R	I	S	E	S
■	■	■	A	V	E	R	S	■	A	E	R	O
A	R	E	T	E	■	E	L	I	■	R	A	Y
S	O	M	A	■	O	P	E	N	E	R	■	■
S	O	P	R	A	N	O	■	D	E	A	L	S
E	S	T	■	S	U	R	■	I	O	N	I	C
S	T	Y	■	H	S	T	■	E	C	O	L	I

Last Friday's Answer 12/12

1	2	3	■	■	4	5	6	■	7	8	9	10
11			12	■	13			■	14			
15				■	16			■	17			
18				19	■	20		21		■	■	■
■	■	■	22		23	■	24			25	26	27
28	29	30				31	■	32				
33				■	34		35	■	36			
37				38	■	39		40				
41					42	■	43			■	■	■
■	■	■	44			45	■	46		47	48	49
50	51	52		■	53		54	■	55			
56					57			■	58			
59					60			■	■	61		

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Marla Sokoloff, 42; Jake Gyllenhaal, 42; Alyssa Milano, 50; Tyson Beckford, 52.

Happy Birthday: Putting everything in order will rid you of stress and boost your energy. Take deep breaths and relax with loved ones. Focus on balance, equality and integrity; you'll feel good about your life, contributions and future. A minimalist attitude will help you put things in perspective and keep overindulgence at bay. Distance yourself from imprudent individuals and wasteful projects. Your numbers are 5, 17, 24, 29, 33, 38, 41.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Tidy up loose ends, take better care of yourself and don't believe everything you hear. Having personal papers in place before the year ends will put your mind at ease and ward off damaging your reputation. Protect against injury or illness. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* You'll thrive with change. Embrace what life has to offer and continue full steam ahead until you are happy with the results you achieve. Use your experience and connections to conquer your goals. Love and romance are on the rise. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Focus on what you are trying to achieve, and you'll make headway. Demonstrate your skills, knowledge and talent, and you'll raise awareness and whatever else you need to reach your goal. A promise or boost in cash will change your life. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Share your thoughts and feelings. Express your interest in what others do or think, and you'll gain input and support to turn your dream into a reality. Pay attention to meaningful relationships and make kindness, love and respect your calling cards. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Think before you say something you'll regret. Do your homework and refrain from initiating change prematurely. Get the facts, find the best solution and work with anyone your plans might influence. Situations will test your beliefs and traditions. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Personal growth is in the stars, and the path to discovery and a positive change will give you hope for a brighter future. Educational pursuits, travel and communication will bring you closer to your desired lifestyle. 4 stars

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Choose your words wisely when dealing with sensitive issues. Shared expenses or space will try your patience. Put guidelines in place to avoid a run-in with someone who doesn't always respect your boundaries. Keep busy, make necessary adjustments and dodge an argument. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Look at every angle before you make a statement or start something new. Approach others with charm and finesse, and you'll have better luck getting your way. Set the standard and aspire to positively impact those you encounter. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Be careful who you trust. Broken promises will leave you in a difficult position. Focus on what you can achieve, and protect your reputation and assets from being dismantled by someone's words or actions. A self-improvement project will pay off. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Dig in and make progress. The more intent you are to crack a challenge, the less interference you'll encounter. Change begins with you and having the mindset to turn your thoughts into something concrete. Do what's best for you and leave nothing to chance. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* A sensitive issue that makes you uncomfortable will surface. Listen, but don't share your opinion. Join activities that require physical, not mental, energy. Don't let what others do disrupt your day or time spent with loved ones. ✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* You can't put a price on love. Choose to dazzle others with charm, kindness and hands-on help. Doing for others will lead to the highest rewards. Spend less, do more and build strong relationships with the people you care about most. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are resilient, pragmatic and flexible. You are enthusiastic and perceptive.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

5		2	1		4			8
	4		7		8			
7				2		3		
8	1			5			2	4
		4				6		
2	6			1			5	9
		6		9				7
			6		5		9	
1			2		7	4		3

Difficulty Level ★ 12/19

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Friday's Answer

1	8	7	5	4	3	6	9	2
3	6	2	9	1	7	5	4	8
5	9	4	6	8	2	1	7	3
9	2	1	4	3	5	7	8	6
4	3	8	7	6	1	9	2	5
6	7	5	8	2	9	3	1	4
8	5	3	1	9	4	2	6	7
2	4	9	3	7	6	8	5	1
7	1	6	2	5	8	4	3	9

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 12/16

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

LYCOPENE — **Solution: 9 letters**

W	A	T	E	R	M	E	L	O	N	R	O	L	O	C
B	C	E	N	O	B	A	S	I	L	S	E	Y	E	A
E	A	I	N	B	E	K	A	T	N	I	H	S	M	N
N	P	L	N	Z	R	D	S	H	O	Ⓡ	Ⓔ	Ⓓ	U	N
E	R	S	A	A	Y	A	E	K	E	R	A	G	S	E
F	I	O	B	N	G	M	I	E	I	A	R	R	N	D
I	C	U	R	S	C	R	E	N	S	N	T	A	O	I
T	O	P	A	K	M	E	O	U	O	C	E	P	C	O
S	T	U	N	O	G	M	G	K	E	N	T	E	E	N
R	C	I	D	N	M	A	E	T	U	H	I	F	L	E
E	P	E	A	I	R	T	O	M	A	T	O	R	L	T
P	S	R	S	A	C	R	M	C	I	T	R	U	S	O
P	O	R	P	H	P	I	L	A	R	E	N	I	M	R
E	E	S	U	T	N	A	D	I	X	O	I	T	N	A
P	A	P	A	Y	A	N	O	I	T	I	N	G	O	C

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Bamboo, Cayenne, Charcoal, Coriander, Cube, Cumin, Garlic, Garnish, Grill, Gyros, Heat, Ketchup, Lemon, Meat, Mediterranean, Olive Oil, Onion, Oregano, Pork, Potatoes, Recipe, Restaurant, Rice, Roast, Rotate, Salt, Serving, Shape, Shawarma, Skewer, Slice, Soak, Sumac, Taste, Thermometer, Tomato, Traditional, Vegetables, Yogurt

Last Friday's Answer: Discover

The NEW **Volume 70** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Vikings beat Colts in OT in biggest comeback in NFL history

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—The Minnesota Vikings completed the biggest comeback in NFL history, erasing a 33-point deficit by beating the Indianapolis Colts 39-36 on Greg Joseph's 40-yard field goal with three seconds left in overtime Saturday to win the NFC North division in their typical dramatic fashion.

Kirk Cousins passed for 460 yards and four touchdowns to lead the Vikings (11-3), who trailed 36-7 late in the third quarter and became just the third team in league history to win 10 games in a season by eight points or fewer.

The Colts (4-9-1) stumbled onto the infamous side of the list, just ahead of the Houston Oilers in the 1992 postseason. They blew a 32-point lead (35-3) and lost to Buffalo (41-38) in overtime.

According to Sportradar data, the Vikings became only the second team in 1,551 regular-season or playoff games since 1930 that a team trailed by 30 or more points in and won.

The Vikings took this rally all the way to their second possession of overtime. Cousins hit K.J. Osborn — who caught the first score and had a career-high 157 yards — for 15 yards. He found Adam Thielen — who had the second of three fourth-quarter touchdown passes — for 21 yards. Then he threw to Justin Jefferson for 13 yards to move into range.

AP

Minnesota Vikings kicker Greg Joseph celebrates with teammates after kicking the game-winning field goal in overtime against the Indianapolis Colts in an NFL football game, Saturday, Dec. 17, 2022, in Minneapolis, Minn.

Ifeadi Odenigbo was called for delay of game for lying on Jefferson to try to keep the Vikings from setting up for the kick, putting Joseph 5 yards closer for the winner.

Bills 32, Dolphins 29

In Orchard Park, N.Y., Tyler Bass hit a 25-yard field goal as time expired, and Buffalo wrapped up its fourth consecutive playoff berth on a snow-slick field in rallying past Miami.

The Bills (11-3) overcame a 29-21 deficit by scoring on their final two drives. Josh Allen tied itwith a 5-yard pass to Dawson Knox and the quarterback then leaped over the line for a 2-point conversion to tie it at 29 with 9:02 remaining.

Allen then oversaw a 15-play, 86-yard drive that ate up the final 5:56 to set up Bass' field goal, which led to numerous Bills players diving head-first to slide in the snow.

Allen threw four touchdown passes to increase his career total to 171 (including one receiving), and tie former Miami quarterback Dan Marino for the most by an NFL player in the first five seasons of his career.

The Dolphins (8-6) entered the weekend in second place and as the AFC's sixth seed. They've now lost three in a row in their bid to qualify for the postseason for the first time since 2016.

Browns 13, Ravens 3

In Cleveland, Deshaun Watson threw a touchdown pass in his home debut for Cleveland, leading the Browns to an ugly win over the AFC North-leading Baltimore Ravens, who need injured star quarterback Lamar Jackson to get back quickly.

Watson wasn't spectacular, but he did enough in his third game since being reinstated from an NFL suspension to help the Browns (6-8) keep their miniscule playoff hopes alive.

Watson, who was banned for 11 games for alleged sexual misconduct, connected with Donovan Peoples-Jones on a 3-yard TD pass in the third quarter to put the Browns up 13-3 — the biggest deficit the Ravens (9-5) have faced all season.

Watson finished 18 of 28 for 161 yards and added 22 on the ground.

49ers 21, Seahawks 13

In Seattle, last Friday rookie quarterback Brock Purdy never doubted he'd take the field for the 49ers with a chance at winning a division title.

But how long Purdy would be able to play through his oblique injury lingered all night in the mind of San Francisco coach Kyle Shanahan.

"We were going to see how long he'd last and we were ready to go with (backup) Josh (Johnson)," Shanahan said. "But he just got comfortable and got better as the game went on. It's pretty unbelievable."

Purdy threw a pair of touchdown passes to George Kittle, and the 49ers won their first NFC West title since 2019, beating the Seattle Seahawks 21-13 on Thursday night.

Despite using their third starting quarterback this season, the 49ers (10-4) continued to show they might be the class of the NFC alongside Philadelphia. San Francisco won its seventh straight, using its stifling defense to frustrate Seattle into countless mistakes.

The Niners got a handful of big plays from their rookie quarterback, who didn't make any throws during the limited practice time leading into the game.

Devin Booker scores 58 in Suns' comeback win over Pelicans

PHOENIX (AP)—Devin Booker scored a season-high 58 points, using one of the best scoring efforts of his career to nearly single-handedly push the Phoenix Suns past the New Orleans Pelicans 118-114 on Saturday night.

It's the second time this season Booker has topped 50 points — he scored 51 against the Bulls on Nov. 30 in just three quarters.

This effort was even more impressive because it brought the Suns back from a 24-point deficit in the second half. The three-time All-Star made 21 of 35 shots, including 6 of 12 3-pointers. He added five rebounds and five assists.

The Pelicans led 83-59 midway through the third quarter, but the Suns used a 25-6 run to cut that advantage to 89-84 going into the fourth. Booker scored 20 points in the third, willing his team back into contention.

Phoenix tied it at 99 with 7:04 left on Josh Okogie's free throw. Booker scored a stunning 25 points in a row for the Suns before Okogie's two free throws, making just about everything he tossed toward the rim as the home crowd roared.

The Suns were clinging to a 111-109 lead when Chris Paul made a crucial 3-pointer with 1:04 remaining. Paul finished with 18 points and eight assists.

The Suns won their second straight game while the Pelicans have dropped three in a row.

Zion Williamson led the Pelicans with 30 points and C.J. McCollum added 27.

Heat 111, Spurs 101

In Mexico City, Jimmy Butler scored 26 points, Bam Adebayo had 22 points and 13 rebounds and Miami extended its winning streak to four, beating San Antonio in the first NBA game in Mexico City since 2019.

Tyler Herro added 21 points and Duncan Robinson and Max Strauss had 12 each for the Heat. Keldon Johnson scored 22 points for San Antonio. At 9-20, the Spurs are last in the Western Conference.

Miami trailed 84-80 entering the fourth, but a three point-play by Robinson put them ahead 87-86 with 10:31 left. The Heat had a 15-6 run and extended the lead to 103-93 on Adebayo's dunk.

The game was the 31st in Mexico, more than any other country outside of the U.S. and Canada. Mexican fans packed the glass-clad, $300 million arena that was built in 2012 and hosts the Capitanes team of the G-League.

Thunder 115, Grizzlies 109

In Oklahoma City, Memphis star Ja Morant was ejected just before halftime and undermanned Oklahoma City ended Memphis' winning at seven.

Morant was ejected with 43 seconds left in the half when he was called for his second technical foul after apparently making remarks to courtside Memphis fans that were derogatory about the officiating.

Morant scored just six points on 3-of-10 shooting. The All-Star guard picked up his first technical 11 seconds earlier after committing a foul to stop play and complain about a no-call on a drive to the basket.

The Thunder, playing without stars Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and Josh Giddey, ended a five-game losing streak. Lu Dort scored 24 points and Isiah Joe had a season-high 23 points, hitting five 3-pointers.

Dillon Brooks led Memphis with 32 points.

Cavaliers 100, Mavericks 99, OT

In Cleveland, Jarrett Allen's dunk with 2:01 remaining in overtime lifted Cleveland past Dallas, keeping the Cavaliers unbeaten in five OT games this season.

Dallas had three opportunities to take the lead in the final minute, including Christian Wood's 30-footer as time expired. Frank Ntilikina was stripped by Donovan Mitchell and Kemba Walker's jumper landed between the backboard and the rim on the other two.

Mitchell scored 25 points and Darius Garland had 18 points, seven rebounds and 12 assists for Cleveland, which has the best home record in the NBA at 14-2. Allen added eight points and 15 rebounds, and Evan Mobley had 17 points and eight rebounds.

Four-time All-Star guard Walker, who signed with Dallas on Nov. 29, had 32 points and seven assists over 42 minutes in his third game. Wood had 26 points and 14 rebounds, and Hardaway scored 13 points.

Luka Doncic, the second-leading scorer in the NBA at 33.0 points per game, did not play for the Mavericks because of a right quadriceps strain.

Clippers 102, Wizards 93

In Los Angeles, Kawhi Leonard scored a season-high 31 points and Los Angeles rallied in the fourth quarter to beat Washington, extending the Wizards' skid to a season-worst nine games.

Leonard carried the offensive load on a day when Paul George, Ivica Zubac, Reggie Jackson and Norman Powell were sidelined. Luke Kennard added a season-high 20 points off the bench, tying his season high with four 3-pointers.

Kristaps Porzingis led the Wizards with 19 points. They have lost 12 of 13.

Bucks 123, Jazz 97

In Milwaukee, Bobby Portis had 22 points and 14 rebounds starting in place of Giannis Antetokounmpo and Milwaukee also played without Khris Middleton in a victory over Utah.

Antetokounmpo sat out because of soreness in his left knee, the fifth game he has missed this season. Middleton has soreness in his right knee.

Portis was 9 of 16 from the field and made two 3-pointers.

Jrue Holiday added 21 points and eight assists and center Brook Lopez had 18 points and eight rebounds to help the Bucks rebound from a 41-point loss in Memphis on Thursday night. Rookie Marjon Beauchamp added 18 points in 19 minutes off the bench.

Malik Beasley and Lauri Markkanen each had 18 points for Utah.

Trail Blazers 107, Rockets 95

In Houston, Anfernee Simons scored 32 points, Damian Lillard added 25 and Portland beat Houston.

Portland led by as many as 22 points before Houston closed the gap to 11 points in the fourth quarter with 2:09 remaining and prompting the Trail Blazers to put their starters back in the game.

Jusuf Nurkic scored 14 points and Josh Hart added 12 points and 13 rebounds for Portland. Lillard added 10 assists and two steals.

Jalen Green led the Rockets with 15 points.

Croatia beats Morocco 2-1 to take 3rd place at World Cup

By JAMES ROBSON
AP SOCCER WRITER

AL RAYYAN, Qatar (AP) — Luka Modric high-fived and embraced his Croatia teammates after what was likely the midfield great's last appearance at the World Cup.

Some of the Morocco players sank to their knees in dismay, while others went in search of the referee to complain.

So much for this being a meaningless game.

Croatia ended up taking third place at the World Cup after a 2-1 win over Morocco at Khalifa International Stadium on Saturday.

"It is as if we have won the gold," said Croatia coach Zlatko Dalić, whose team lost in the final four years ago.

AP

Croatia's Luka Modric, front, duels for the ball with Morocco's Hakim Ziyech during the World Cup third-place playoff soccer match between Croatia and Morocco at Khalifa International Stadium in Doha, Qatar, Saturday, Dec. 17, 2022.

To some, the third-place match is considered to be little more than an exhibition between two losing semifinalists. The day before the match, Morocco coach Walid Regragui described it as a "booby prize."

However, as the final whistle blew on Morocco's historic run at the World Cup, the disappointment was clear to see.

So, too, was the delight on Croatian faces.

Modric, at the age of 37 and a serial winner of soccer's biggest prizes with Real Madrid, could not keep the smile from his face as he went up to collect his bronze medal.

"This medal is very important for us, for me, for my country, for Croatia as a national team," Modric said. "We confirm with this medal that Croatia is playing an important role in world of football. We are leaving Qatar as winners."

The World Cup final between defending champion France and Argentina is scheduled for Sunday at Lusail Stadium.

Mislav Orsic scored the decisive goal for Croatia shortly before halftime to ensure Modric finished on a winning note, if this does indeed turn out to be his last World Cup match.

"Now it is step by step by step and continue until least the Nations League and after we will see," Modric said.

Defender Josko Gvardiol put Croatia ahead in the seventh minute with a diving header, but Achraf Dari evened the score in the ninth.

It is the second time Croatia has taken third place at the World Cup. The team also achieved that feat in its first appearance at the tournament as an independent nation in 1998.

"These are the moments we live for, we work for, we train for," Dalić said. "That's the most emotional moment of the World Cup for us, tonight's match and the win."

After becoming the first African team to reach the World Cup semifinals, Morocco's tournament ended in two losses. But the team's achievements in Qatar will be remembered for the outpouring of pride among Arab nations.

4-PEAT

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to play catchup as the Lady Dolphins were smooth as butter shooting their shots. While the Lady Mantas managed to score 14 points and the Lady Dolphins 12, the deficit was just too big to close.

Pangelinan ended up scoring 6 more points to finish withh 14 points in the game, while Roligat added 8 more in support. Kalista Klaver-McDonald, Raenna Ramarui, and Helenor Ogumoro also chipped in at least 2 points in the title-clincher.

Younis wound up with 10 in a losing effort.

Grace Christian Academy took third place after beating Agape Christian School, 42-29. They lost to SSHS, 36-35, in the semifinals earlier in the morning.

Lady Dolphins head coach Dan Wollak said about the season, "I thought they played extremely well all tournament long. A couple of the games we started off really struggling getting the ball in the hoop. And then once we kind of got into our offense, into our flow, and started making easy baskets, they kind of settled down and I was happy with their effort."

Wollak attributed their success to the team that have been together throughout the four years. "We have a ton of seniors that have been playing together for four years so they know what we're trying to accomplish offensively, defensively, and the transition. They're really comfortable with each other, so just do what we do. They know each other so well… if we play our brand of basketball, we're pretty confident that we're [going to] be successful.

When asked how it felt to coach the team to four straight titles, Wollak said "it feels great. The girls for the last two and a half months, they've been training hard and they've been coming into practice every day and they worked their butts off and like I said, they've been together for so long that they just naturally gel and they have that chemistry."

With eight players graduating next year, he said "we'll be adapting to a new team and well… we're [going to] lose a lot of leadership, a lot of skill, but our seniors laid a foundation for our freshmen, sophomores, and juniors, and now… they're passing off the torch to the future…"

The championship team consists of the aforementioned Pangelinan, Roligat, Klaver-McDonald, Ramarui, and Ogumoro, along with Kina Rangamar, Marielle Lopez, Loralyle Ogumoro, Jillian Ferrer, Naomi Zannobi, Tamia Hix, Lena Hofschneider, Sha Aina Mendoza, and Tinalyn Litulumar. The rest of the coaching staff with Wollack are Gabrielle Race, Preston Basa, and Jun Del Rosario.

The IT&E Interscholastic Girls High School Basketball League was run by the Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation.

MHS 38 – Pangelinan 14, Roligat 8, Ramarui 6, Klaver-McDonald and Mendoza 4, H. Ogumoro 2.

SSHS 24 – Younis 10, Ramon 7, Manahane 4, Sagarino 3.

LEIGH GASES

Marianas High School's Helenor Ogumoro is fouled by a Saipan Southern High School defender as she goes for a shot during the championship of the 2022 IT&E Interscholastic Girls High School Basketball League last Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

ISAIAH

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hope next year I can beat this time and cut two minutes for my butterfly," said Aleksenko.

The next day on Thursday, Aleksenko also made waves when he timed in at 23.31 in the first leg of the 50m x 4 freestyle relay.

"The first swimmer's time in the relay event becomes an official time. He broke Juhn Tenorio's 23.97 from the FINA World Championships in Abu Dhabi last year. Isaiah's time is almost 23 seconds. If he cuts 23, it is USA National level. But his 50m freestyle FINA points is 654. So, it means his 200 butterfly's level is higher than his 50m freestyle. We will keep brushing up on his butterfly from now on," said Kimura.

Aside from Aleksenko, Maria Batallones also performed well in the pool last Thursday, submitting a 28.32 in the freestyle relay.

"It's also a fantastic time! Even if it's just in a short course meet, we've never seen 28 seconds since (former CNMI national swimmer) Nina Mosley," the NMI team coach added.

Aleksenko and Batallones are joined in the Land Down Under by Jinnosuke Suzuki and Shoko Litulumar.

MESSI

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Who wins the Golden Boot — the award for the top scorer — is just one of the many other narratives around the final.

There's France, the dominant national team of this generation, looking to become the first to win back-to-back World Cups since Brazil in 1962. The country that produced Michel Platini, Zinedine Zidane, Thierry Henry and now Mbappé will be playing in the final for the fourth time in the last seven World Cups, more than anyone else.

Then there's Didier Deschamps, a World Cup winner as a player in 1998 and now bidding to win it two times as a coach. Vittorio Pozzo was the only other man to coach two world champion teams, with Italy in 1934 and 1938.

Like France, Argentina is seeking a third World Cup title — after 1978 and 1986 — to move into outright fourth place in the all-time list. It would end a 36-year wait for soccer's biggest prize, since Maradona's string of virtuoso performances in Mexico in 1986.

That made Maradona forever a hero in Argentina, and an icon around the soccer world. Messi now appears to be at that level — win or lose on Sunday when he'll play in a record 26th World Cup match.

Messi has evoked comparisons with Maradona in the way he has pushed Argentina to the final, scoring five goals, setting up three more and thrilling his team's legion of fans, who have poured into Qatar throughout the World Cup in numbers only really matched by those from Morocco.

In that sense, it will seem like a home game for Argentina, with France's supporters sure to be heavily outnumbered amid a sea of blue-and-white jerseys — many of which will have "MESSI 10" written on them.

It is hard to pick a winner.

France is a hardened tournament team with plenty of experience and the quality to eke out wins when not playing at its best. Deschamps has kept France's level high despite losing key players ahead of the tournament like Paul Pogba, N'Golo Kante, Presnel Kimpembe and Karim Benzema, the reigning world player of the year.

The French are the masters of being pragmatic, defending compactly and breaking at pace, typically through Mbappé down the left and through Antoine Griezmann, reinvented over the past month as a midfield playmaker.

Indeed, expect to see Mbappé and Messi walking around a lot during the game, not bothering to defend or press. That is in the script, rather than them being lazy. Part of the skill of Deschamps and Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni is their ability to forge a team that has learned to defend a man light.

As for Argentina, the team is largely set up simply to get the best out of Messi, with Scaloni likely to select a quartet of central midfielders like in the 3-0 win over Croatia in the semifinals. They will scrap and press, and then give the ball to Messi to weave his magic. Or to Julián Álvarez, the striker who started the tournament as a backup for that unthinkable 2-1 opening loss to Saudi Arabia and now is undroppable with four goals to his name.

Álvarez is pinching himself that, at 22 and pretty much at the start of his career, he is the attacking foil for Messi at the great man's last World Cup.

Similarly, the tens of thousands of spectators inside the stadiums in Qatar, and the millions watching on television around the world, have continued to be amazed at the magic Messi keeps on delivering.

Anyone who isn't French, or maybe a fervent fan of Ronaldo, is likely to be willing on Argentina's diminutive No. 10 in the biggest match of his career.

Eight years ago, Messi walked away from the 1-0 loss to Germany in the 2014 final with the Golden Ball award for the tournament's best player.

This time, he'll want instead to be lifting another trophy, made of 18-carat solid gold, to cap a career like no other.

Shane's buzzer-beater delivers title to AK-Toyota

MARK RABAGO

Atkins Kroll sales manager Kevin Barnes holds the championship trophy surrounded by AK-Toyota players and Mariana Islands Basketball League officials after the finals of the Inaugural IT&E MIBL Fantasy Draft Tournament last Friday at the Agape Gymnasium.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Shane Deleon Guerrero's basket with no time remaining averted a monumental collapse by AK-Toyota as they beat IT&E, 73-72, in an epic winner-take all championship in the Inaugural IT&E MIBL Fantasy Draft Tournament last Friday at the Agape Gymnasium.

The CNMI national player's bank shot from about 6 feet away was an answered prayer for AK-Toyota coach Dennis Cortez as moments before Rodel Pastrana gave IT&E an improbable 72-71 lead on two free throws with 4.8 seconds left in the ballgame.

Pastrana's two charities capped a 15-3 rally by IT&E just when everyone thought AK-Toyota was zooming toward the championship.

AK-Toyota's 10-point advantage came on the heels of IT&E's own run that gave them a 58-57 lead on a 3-pointer by ageless Ed Diaz with time down to 5:42.

The game appeared to be out of IT&E's reach, however, moments later when AK-Toyota went on the aforementioned scoring tear capped by a Raymond Velasco free throw that made it 68-58 with 2:34 remaining.

Back-to-back triples by Kelvin Fitial and Diaz and a fastbreak layup by Airson Atan off a steal by the high-flyer made it 68-66.

A free throw off a loose ball foul on AK-Toyota's Frank Ferrer stopped the bleeding somewhat and made it 69-66 with 1:09 left.

AK-Toyota would turn the ball over in the next play and Pastrana made it a 1-point contest with an under-goal stab with 43 seconds left.

An AK-Toyota player would step out of bounds with 39 seconds left and IT&E capitalized on the miscue when Pastrana was fouled and went 2-for-2 to give IT&E a 70-69 lead.

Velasco then came to the rescue of AK-Toyota when he rebounded a miss and hit a sweet bank shot to give them back the lead, 71-70, with 10 seconds remaining.

Both teams would then exchange turnovers before Pastrana was fouled again and made both free throws to shove IT&E back in the lead.

What ensued was Deleon Guerrero's buzzer-beater that had everyone in the AK-Toyota bench rise up and mob the athletic wingman.

"In my head, I just needed to get the ball and score for my team. It was all my mentality…I'm just happy… happy as we came a long way… we're the only undefeated team…" said Deleon Guerrero moments after his memorable shot, which was the 26-year-old's first game-winner in a championship match.

For his part, Cortez said while his team almost lost composure in the end, they were fortunate to get the last possession and luckily Deleon Guerrero made the winning shot.

"I just told them to play hard and play as a team when they were rattled when IT&E made back-to-back 3-pointers in a span of 4 seconds…"

On the last play after Pastrana's two free throws gave IT&E the lead, Cortez instructed his players to give Deleon Guerrero a pick and make him go all the way.

He then thanked all his players, sponsor AK-Toyota, Agape Christian School, and Mariana Islands Basketball League for organizing the tourney.

AK-Toyota was in control for the majority of the game, leading 22-14 after the first quarter and 36-28 at the half. They still had a comfortable 51-44 spread heading into the payoff period before all hell broke loose in the fourth.

Deleon Guerrero top-scored for the champions with 20 points, while Ferrer, Juan Camacho, and Velasco also finished in double figures.

Pastrana fired a game-high 22 points in the heart-breaking loss, while Atan, Fitial, and Diaz pumped in 12 points or more for IT&E.

AK-Toyota 73 – Deleon Guerrero 20, Ferrer 18, Camacho 10, Velasco 10, Guntar 8, Lilies 7.

IT&E 72 – Pastrana 22, Atan 14, Fitial 12, Diaz 12, Capalad 6, Basa 6.

Scoring by quarters: 22-14, 36-28, 51-44, 73-72.

Lady Eagles still undefeated in MS v-ball

LEIGH GASES

A file photo shows a Mount Carmel School varsity volleyball player spiking the ball during one of their games of the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Middle School Volleyball League 2022-2023 at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

By LEIGH GASES
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CORRESPONDENT

The Grace Christian Academy Lady Eagles varsity volleyball team remains undefeated in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Middle School Volleyball League 2022-2023.

The Lady Eagles triumphed over Hopwood Middle School Hilitais after two sets, 21-9, 21-16, last Tuesday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium for its seventh win in as many outings.

The Hilitais were no match for the mighty Eagles' serves and attacks at the net with the first set ending as swiftly as it started. The Hilitais put on a better fight in the second set but was taken down by an onslaught of consecutive points by the Eagles' six to keep their streak alive going into the holidays.

In other results that night, Saipan International School varsity bested Francisco M. Sablan Middle School, 23-21, 21-17; Tanapag Middle School varsity team came back to win the tie-breaker third set against Chacha Oceanview Middle School, 16-21, 21-5, 15-8; Dandan Middle School varsity defeated Mount Carmel School, 21-18, 21-17; and TMS junior varsity shined against DMS junior varsity, 21-17, 21-12.

In the standings behind GCA is TMS with a 6-1 card, followed by SIS and HMS tied with five wins and two losses each; DMS are at a 3-4 record; MCS and COVMS are at 2-5 each; SCS is at 1-6; and FMS is at 1-7.

The final regular season game will resume on Jan. 10, 2023, with the double-elimination tournament playoffs set to begin on Jan. 12 and the championship game to be played on Jan. 14.

SSC holds successful time trials

Saipan Swim Club swimmers recently donned their caps and goggles in an attempt to set new personal bests in the lap pool at Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio.

The SSC time trial schedule of 16 events included events ranging from a 25-yard kick for beginners to a 200-yard individual medley for the more seasoned swimmers.

Excited family members lined the pool to watch their kids and grandkids performance in the pool. For some of the almost 60 signed-up swimmers this was their first experience at swimming in an organized race environment and the pre-race jitters clearly showed on their faces.

One swimmer was heard asking; "Is it okay to be nervous?" The answer is, it is perfectly normal to be nervous, it is all part of swimming, the hard work put in during practice, the culmination of the hard work at a time trial or race, the competition, the support of your team mates, setting a new personal best, and stepping out of your comfort zone and trying something new. Once done with the races the smiles and the sense of accomplishment emerges through, the looks on the faces changes to that say; "we got this!"

"I am really happy with the way everyone stepped up and tried their best. I am super impressed with the younger swimmers who practice at Green Flash Dive Shop for joining the trials and trying something different. Practicing swimming is one thing but swimming in front of a crowd against other swimmers is a completely different ball game.Their excitement was contagious," said SSC coach Richard Sikkel.

He added that SCC's developmental team—the BB and B swimmers—also did really well, saying these trials were an excellent way for SSC coaches to see what the swimmers are doing well and what areas need work and improvement.

"A few stand-outs emerged showing that the younger swimmers are hungry for speed and they are nipping at the heels of our older swimmers. It is a good reminder that it takes work to get top times and it is even more work to keep registering top times. Our competitive swimmers keep making improvements and their steady progression is encouraging," he said.

SSC's last scheduled event of 2022 is the Hundred Hundreds on Dec. 24. The 2023 event schedule of events is in the works and will see the return of the Meek and Mighty, the Pau Pau to Tanapag swim, and local favorite the Escape from Managaha. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Swim Club recently held a time trial at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio.

Vikings beat Colts in OT in biggest comeback in NFL history

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Shane's buzzer-beater delivers title to AK-Toyota

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4-peat for Lady Dolphins in HS hoops

By LEIGH GASES
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CORRESPONDENT

LEIGH GASES

The Marianas High School Lady Dolphins varsity basketball team poses for a photo after winning their fourth straight title when they defeated Saipan Southern High School in the championship game of the 2022 IT&E Interscholastic Girls High School Basketball League last Saturday at the MHS Gymnasium. Joining them are their coaches and Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation president James Lee, left, back row, and CNMI women's national team head coach Catherine Attao, right.

The Marianas High School Lady Dolphins won their unprecedented fourth straight title after defeating the Saipan Southern High School Lady Manta Rays in the championship game of the 2022 IT&E Interscholastic Girls High School Basketball League last Saturday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Coasting into the postseason with only one loss, the Lady Dolphins carried on their momentum in the finals, defeating the Lady Mantas in the first game of the morning, 46-28, then defeating them 38-24 in the final game.

In the first period of the championship game while the Lady Dolphins were racking up points early on and wading almost effortlessly through the court, the Lady Mantas were slightly out of their depth as they were limited to just 14 points.

Yasmeen Younis scored 6 of the team's points with teammates Leney Sagarino adding a 2-pointer and Tasilyn Ramon scoring two free throws.

From within the paint, speedy MHS junior Destiny Pangelinan whipped out the big guns, as is her modus operandi and scored 8 points in the first half. She and teammate Angellyn Roligat were one and the same as communication and teamwork allowed Roligat 6 points and assisted Pangelinan with a big lead into the second half.

The Lady Mantas found a better handle on the ball in the second half, but were too late

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Isaiah gets most FINA points CNMI history

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Isaiah Aleksenko finally turned his limitless potential into reality on Day 3 of the 2022 FINA World Championships last Wednesday in Melbourne.

The 16-year-old phenom from Marianas High School earned 682 points after swimming the 200m butterfly in 2:02.96.

"Isaiah Aleksenko made one more amazing history! Isaiah swam in the 200m butterfly. Not only did he accomplish his goal first but also his time is so amazing. His 682 points in the event is the highest FINA point in the history of NMI swimming," said Team NMI coach Hiroyuki Kimura.

To top it off, Kimura said Aleksenko also beat Guam's top swimmer Jimi Hendricks "by an overwhelming distance" further cementing Aleksenko as the next big thing as far as CNMI swimming is concerned.

"I was really happy with my results for the 200m butterfly and for the 50m freestyle. I

See ISAIAH on Page 18

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI national swimmers Isaiah Aleksenko, right, and Jinnosuke Suzuki pose for a photo before competing in their events in the 2022 FINA World Championships in Melbourne.

Messi seeks glory, Argentina meets France in World Cup final

By STEVE DOUGLAS
AP SPORTS WRITER

DOHA, Qatar (AP)—It is now or never for Lionel Messi.

The Argentina superstar's once-in-a-generation career will be defined—for many—by whether he leads his country to the World Cup title on Sunday.

Can he finally, at the age of 35, win soccer's biggest prize to secure his place alongside Pelé and Diego Maradona in the pantheon of the game's greatest ever players?

Standing in his way is France, the defending champion, and Kylian Mbappé, the player best positioned to take over from Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo as soccer's marquee name.

That's if he hasn't already.

Mbappé also is standing on the cusp of history heading into the match at the 80,000-seat Lusail Stadium, a title decider that is filled with storylines.

The 23-year-old France forward is looking to emulate Pelé by being a champion at his first two World Cups and set up the prospect of a third title, a feat only ever achieved by the Brazil great who has been hospitalized during this year's tournament because of a respiratory infection.

Mbappé was 19 when he led France to its second World Cup title in 2018, becoming the youngest scorer in a final since a 17-year-old Pelé did so in 1958. While Pelé ended up being a peripheral figure in Brazil's 1962 triumph — he didn't play in the knockout stage because of injury — Mbappé has been France's go-to player in the team's bid to repeat.

Indeed, Mbappé enters the final tied as the tournament's leading scorer with five goals. The player alongside him? Messi, of course.

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AP

Argentina's Lionel Messi celebrates after his teammate Julian Alvarez scored his side's third goal during the World Cup semifinal soccer match between Argentina and Croatia at the Lusail Stadium in Lusail, Qatar, Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2022.